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WORLD WAR AND WORLD POLICY

THE primary purpose of Mr. Churchill's speech before Congress was to reassure Americans that the British were not so elated by victory in North Africa that they were in danger of forgetting or neglecting the Pacific theatre of war. Mr. Churchill's method was characteristic. He took with him General Wavell and intimated to Congress that he intended to restore the British Empire in the Far East and to hold on to India. British Imperial interests, in Mr. Churchill's view, make it inconceivable for us to be satisfied with anything less than the total defeat of Japan. Welcome though this assurance will also be in Chungking, we doubt if this is the happiest way of conveying British intentions to the Chinese, whose notion of victory in the Far East is not the restoration of the mentality that once dominated Singapore and Shanghai. Addressing himself to Russia, Mr. Churchill wisely recalled that the British had at no time fought more than fifteen German divisions in contrast to the Russian engagement of one hundred and ninety divisions, and he promised to take more of the burden from the Russian front this summer. Speaking to Congress and the world, Mr. Churchill said nothing of the other great outstanding questions between the Western Democracies, Russia and China; but there was no passage in Mr. Churchill's speech more welcome than the strong hint that he and the President would have a full discussion with Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek.

Air War in Europe

After the final surrender of Tunisia the enemy must be painfully aware that, with large forces spread between Iceland and Alexandria, the Allies have a wide choice of action and may be able to exploit the element of surprise in terms both of time and place. Meanwhile, an *entr'acte* whose probable duration must be the subject of anxious enemy guessing is being filled by intensive air activity. On the Eastern Front the air forces of both sides are being employed in efforts to disrupt rearward communications, good results being claimed by the Russians. In the West, heavy attacks by U.S. bombers against enemy naval bases have been overshadowed in dramatic news value by the success achieved by R.A.F. bomber squadrons in breaching the Mohne and Eder dams. On the Southern Front, airfields and harbours in Italy, Sardinia and Sicily have been destructively raided. Great material damage has clearly been done: Italy can ill spare her losses in shipping and grounded aircraft, and in Western Germany the flooding of the Ruhr and Eder valleys, followed inevitably by an acute shortage of water for hydro-electrical and other industrial purposes (to say nothing of A.R.P.), is bound to have serious results on war production, though they may not affect deliveries to the fronts for some months. As for morale, it seems safe to assume that this culminating blow will strain almost to breaking point the endurance of the population of the hard-hit Ruhr, whatever success Goebbels is having in the rest of Germany with his exhortations to be "tough as a tank." Italian reactions are difficult to assess, particularly since news from Italy takes the form mainly of wild and wishful rumours of *coups d'état*, abdications and peace offers. Fascism has been entrenched for 20 years and the Ovra is an efficient organisation; we should do well to assume that through patriotism or obedience the Italian Army and people will fight on unless they are given a way of escape. Our demand for "unconditional surrender" from Italy no less than from Germany presumably stands; but we cannot secure formal surrender from chaos or conclude peace with anarchy. Is there any reason why the United Nations leaflets should not now state the conditions with which we should expect an alternative Government in Italy to comply—repudiation of Germany, liquidation of Fascismo, restoration of civil rights and representative government—as a preliminary to peace?

French Disunity and Resistance

With France also an invasion theatre, our capacity to co-operate with the French resistance movement becomes more important than ever. There is unhappily no real progress to record in the negotiations outside France between Generals Giraud and de Gaulle. Both say they are ready to meet; de Gaulle insists on Algiers as the meeting place, while Giraud excludes Algiers (presumably for fear of rival demonstrations) and offers a choice of rendezvous in Morocco. If this were the only obstacle the disputants might well leave it to, say, President Roosevelt to fix the place of meeting. But the real cause of dispute goes much deeper, and takes us to more encouraging events inside France. Last week a secret "Council of French Resistance," whose headquarters in France are presided over by an anonymous Commissioner responsible to General de Gaulle, made its appearance on the scene. In a manifesto issued through General de Gaulle's headquarters the Council, which claims to include representatives of all the Left-Centre and Left parties in France, has demanded that the proposed meeting between the Generals shall take place at Algiers "in broad daylight," and that a provisional Government under the presidency of General de Gaulle shall be forthwith established in North Africa, General Giraud being asked to accept the position of Commander of the French armed forces under the Provisional Government. This demand will not be to General Giraud's liking and still less to the liking of the ex-Vichyists in Algiers, but the United Nations cannot afford to leave matters indefinitely in their present state of suspense. Whatever doubts may be entertained about the political proclivities of General de Gaulle himself, there is ample evidence that he has become, in the eyes of the friends of the Allies in France, a legend, a creative symbol of resistance, whereas General Giraud, despite the armed forces at his disposal, has no political support at all in France. In the interests of the United Nations' cause the right course is surely to acknowledge the value of "the legend"—which means in fact backing de Gaulle. The conditions of support should be a purge of certain elements in the de Gaulle entourage and a clear understanding that any provisional Government over which de Gaulle presides should be more broadly based and less personalised than his present administration.

The Busmen's Grievance

The scattered bus strikes up and down the country have been witness to the widespread discontent with the Arbitration Tribunal's outright rejection of the whole of the transport workers' claims. Coming on top of the concession of advances to the engineers and of the dispute, still in progress, over advances to the railway workers, the trouble among the busmen represents a major problem, almost exactly analogous to the labour struggle which is at present proceeding in the United States. The argument against giving wage-advances is, in sum, that as there are no additional supplies of consumers' goods to be had, there is no point in paying out more wages, and that this cannot be done without danger of monetary inflation. Even if the additions were to be given wholly as deferred pay, it is argued that there is already quite enough pent-up purchasing power waiting to be released after the war, and that, apart from this, the forced savings might only displace savings now voluntarily made. In relation to the busmen in particular, there is the argument that they are, in respect of wage-rates, relatively well paid, even if they have no share in the high wartime earnings which accrue to pieceworkers in the war trades, and that, although it is admitted that the strain and stress of their work have increased greatly, this is no more than can be said of many other classes of workers. What the men feel that all these arguments fail to meet is that the engineers have been given an advance, and they have not. The miners have received improved conditions, and they have not. Their sense of grievance is strong and entirely natural; nor is there any way of removing it. except by concessions, as long as there is no consistent policy of wage- and income-determination. The present policy, maintained right through the war, of trusting to ordinary collective bargaining, with arbitration in reason, but no principles laid down for the arbitrators to follow, is bound to provoke discontent. Either the busmen should be allowed something, or there should be a clear principle, applicable to all, behind the rejection of their claims.

Wage-policy

It is important to remember, as some of the commentators on the busmen's action have evidently failed to do, that the recent strikes have not been against any legally binding award of the National Arbitration Tribunal. Perhaps Mr. Bevin ought to have referred the case, under his special powers, to the Tribunal for a binding decision; but he did not. The arbitration proceedings in the busmen's case were part of the voluntary procedure of collective bargaining, with no legal sanction behind them. That this should have been so is part of the policy of not having a policy about wages which Mr. Bevin has consistently pursued—a policy, or no-policy, which under war conditions we believe to have been from the outset entirely wrong. Of course, the blame for this does not rest solely on Mr. Bevin. This no-policy was adopted, before Mr. Bevin went to the Ministry of Labour, at the combined insistence of the Trades Union Congress and the Employers' Confederation; and the responsibility of Mr. Bevin is that of having maintained it in face of growing shortages of man-power and of consumers' goods. The same thing happened on the railways, where the railway unions, having had their claim turned down by voluntary arbitration, are now having a second try by invoking the compulsory procedure. It has to be conceded that, measured in terms of the almost entire absence of serious strikes during the war, the policy of no-policy has hitherto appeared successful in one essential feature. But the strain of it becomes steadily more severe, and it is now in really serious danger of breaking down and of sweeping away with it the compulsory procedure which has been weakened by being kept in subordination to it. It looks as if, unless the war ends soon, the Government will have to assume in all industries the task of compulsory wage-regulation, and to lay down definite principles of wage-policy. But it will be immensely harder to do this now than it would have been to do it in 1940, when such a policy would have been accepted readily by the vast majority of the people.

Concentration—The Last Lap

Mr. Dalton's account of the progress of "concentration"—which, he tells us, is now practically complete except in the tailoring and printing industries—serves to bring out the extent to which small-scale production is still dominant over a wide range of consumers' trades. Concentration has involved the closing of 2,800 establishments and the release of 235,000 workers for the Services or for war industries—an average of about 80 workers for each establishment closed down. These figures, of course, exclude a vast number of very small establishments which have been closed not under compulsory orders but for other reasons. Indeed, concentration tends to be applied to larger rather than smaller factories, because the larger are of more use either for conversion into war factories or for storage space. Most of the releases accomplished under concentration schemes have been in a small group of industries, especially hosiery, boots, pottery and carpet factories. In the clothing industries, the very large number of tiny establishments has hitherto stood in the way of rapid progress with closings-down; and it appears that these industries are to bear the brunt of the campaign for release of man-power during the present year. Serious difficulties are bound to arise. In the absence of any plan for compensation out of public funds, it has been hard enough to arrange for the pooling of the businesses of relatively large firms under the "nucleus firm" system. This sort of arrangement simply cannot be stretched to cover a mob of tiny businesses; and serious hardships will arise as Mr. Dalton, under pressure from Mr. Bevin, squeezes out more and more of the "little men." The same sort of squeeze, again without compensation, is being applied just now to large numbers of small master-builders and repairers. This is, of course, only another instalment of the serial story of injustice done to the owner of small businesses on account of the refusal to institute any general scheme of compensation. It is too late now for the evil to be undone; but the public should not be blind to the hardships which the process involves.

A National Health Service

The Labour Party's latest instalment of its reconstruction programme is embodied in a threepenny pamphlet, *National Service for Health*. This, unlike the report on Local Government on which we commented recently, is a thoroughly workmanlike document. Beginning with an account of the present unsatisfactory position of the health services, it comes down on the side of a completely unified service, based on full-time, salaried general practitioners, working co-operatively through local Health Centres linked up with regionally organised hospital and specialist services. The plan involves the inclusion of the voluntary hospitals within the regional arrangements; and it contemplates the survival of private medical practice merely temporarily, and not on a basis that would allow the same doctor to take both public and private patients. The Report recognises that the plan cannot be brought fully into force at once: in particular, the establishment of the local Health Centres is bound to take time. But the Labour Party wants the general principles to be accepted now, and as much as possible of the complete plan to be put into effect without delay. The importance of "choice of doctor" is recognised, and is meant to be safeguarded under the arrangements proposed for the new Health Centres; but it is rightly argued that the existing panel system gives the doctor no real chance of so acting as, wherever possible, to prevent rather than to cure disease. The need for close links between the "home doctor" and the specialist and hospital services on the one hand and the environmental public health services on the other is rightly stressed; and finally it is convincingly shown that a comprehensive health service for the whole people is much the most economical way of tackling the job. In 1939 Great Britain was spending on medical treatment nearly £150 million, exclusive of medical benefits under the Insurance Acts or under voluntary insurance. At present prices this is equivalent to a good deal more, say, from £165 to £170 millions. The Beveridge Report put the cost of a comprehensive public medical service at £170 millions. This, as the Labour Report argues, may be too low for the scheme the Labour Party wants; but clearly the additional cost will not be large, though much more of it will fall on taxes instead of private incomes after payment of tax. A salaried State Medical Service, the Report argues, will actually be a good deal more economical than the existing combination of public and private practice.

Food and Finance in Parliament (*by our Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Woolton's reputation, which stands high both in Parliament and in the country, owes much to the competence of his Parliamentary secretaries who have met and dealt with criticism in the House. Both Bob Boothby and Gwilym Lloyd George were prepared to listen to ideas put up to them by M.P.s and to press their adoption upon their Ministry. Much of the success of the Ministry of Food has undoubtedly been due to its receptiveness, a quality rarely shown by older departments. Mabane, Woolton's present assistant, has not the calibre of either of his predecessors. The story of his Ministry's record in the past year was a good one but was told in a humdrum way. A good second-rater, however, can probably carry on successfully now that the major decisions of policy have been laid down. Few serious criticisms were advanced in the debate beyond the need for extending canteen facilities in small factories, especially for women workers and the desirability of raising standards of milk cleanliness.

Finance debates are rarely exciting. That in the Lords this week was enlivened by Keynes's maiden speech upon his proposals for an international clearing union which he recommended as "essential to the healthy trade of any country and not least of all to our own." It was significant that he said nothing about the position of foreign trade in a planned economy, presumably because he was afraid of frightening the Americans. The only bright spot in the Commons debate on the Finance Bill was Schuster's reasoned plea for a recasting of the whole taxation system for the purpose of encouraging and controlling industry.

Ministerial statements in the debate on the Bermuda Conference were very unsatisfactory. Some of the reasons for the Government's reticence are legitimate; it is obviously undesirable to state publicly all one's plans. The House fears, however, that the need for reticence is being used as a cloak for inaction. It realises that the conference on Refugees was removed from London, primarily at the request of the U.S. State Department, to Bermuda so as to be free from the pressure of public opinion and is accordingly distrustful.

Labour feeling mounts against the new Pensions Bill and a motion asking the Government to withdraw the bill was only defeated by a narrow vote after a stormy Party meeting.

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THE TERMS GOEBBELS WANTS

It is obvious that in conjunction with the growing menace of our bombers and the threat of a Second Front on the soil of the Continent itself, political warfare ought now to rank among our chief offensive weapons. In this branch of the military art what is essential is to blend a ray of hope with the gathering darkness of fear. Events are the best evidence that the United Nations are accumulating the power that will eventually enable them to work their will upon the Germany of the Nazis. But what is their will? First and chiefly to break to-day, beyond hope of recovery, this power which has banished civilisation from Europe. On this negative part of our purpose we are all at one, the Left with the Right and the English-speaking peoples with the Russians. But on any more positive policy there are sharp divisions and the little that has been said with authority has been excessively meagre and vague.

In this vacuum any detailed programme that comes from an influential yet unofficial source is apt to receive excessive attention. Dr. Goebbels will know how to make the utmost use of the policy for a settlement with Germany drafted by a group of Tory Members of both Houses over which Sir John Wardlaw-Milne presides. He will not tell Germans what all of us know, that this group, so far from representing the Government has formed a Die-hard opposition, both in home affairs and on military policy. It includes men who were foremost in pressing for appeasement up to the outbreak of this war. Its organ in the press is appropriately the *Sunday Times*, which before the war was among the most consistent apologists for the Nazi regime. To-day these opportunists have swung with the facility of their kind to the opposite extreme. Consistent only in their intemperance, they now address to the vacillating German people their somewhat premature *væ victis!* They propose the dismemberment of the Reich, which is to lose the Rhineland (including the Ruhr) and East Prussia, both of them solidly German lands. They call for an occupation of indefinite duration, the postponement of a peace treaty for "several years," and the extension of allied control not merely over armaments and the aircraft industry but also over the whole intellectual life of the nation, its press, its wireless and its educational services. This impracticable domination, it is apparently suggested, is to continue even after the distant conclusion of peace. A final clause calls for a permanent control over German finance, ostensibly to prevent dumping. War criminals are to be tried, not by any tribunal which could pretend to impartiality, but by courts martial drawn in each case from the accusing ally.

If any terms even distantly resembling these were to be adopted, two consequences would infallibly follow. In the first place they would unite the best Germans and the worst in a last ditch resistance. In the second place, they would forbid after the armistice any collaboration between the victors and any Germans—even those who aided the Allies in the overthrow of the Nazis. In fact, as everyone agrees who thinks about these problems, Germany after the war will necessarily be administered by Germans; the difficulties are to reach agreement amongst the victorious nations about which Germans are to be entrusted with responsibility and to provide conditions in which reconstruction can be carried out in spite of the hate, misery and collapse of war.

We have yet to see published any realistic analysis of the forces that are likely to exist in Europe when the power of the German war machine is broken. The position may be more like that of 1919 than most of us have expected. The most important difference will be that the Soviet Union will be one of the great victorious Powers. Throughout Europe there will be a complex of insurgent groups; most of these seem to combine nationalism with some form of Socialism. The people of Europe will want, if we must summarise a complex situation in a sentence, to end Nazi domination, to retain the autonomy of the national traditions which are in their bones, to regain personal freedom, and, above all, to begin building a society which holds the prospect of an improved standard of living and of social security. Competing and vengeful nationalisms will still be the greatest difficulty with which we shall have to cope. But there will be a period when an understanding between the victorious Powers could lay the foundation of a stable Europe which would not again become a shambles within a generation. If that were done, disillusioned Germans could look forward to a future of self-respect in which they could share in the benefits of international government, so long as they finally abandoned the hopes of German domination.

The right approach, if we wish to lay this foundation, is to begin by concentrating on the immense task of social reconstruction, which should be from the first designed to override frontiers and to make the prosperity of one group depend on the prosperity of another. When German war industries are dismantled, the resources which have been perverted for destruction should be set to work full time into making the goods that the people of Europe, including the Germans, will need. Hitler's one useful contribution to Europe has been the construction of roads and railways which overrun frontiers, and in so far as he has laid the foundations for economic unity, Britain and Russia and America should develop and maintain his achievement under international management. Then gradually the social and economic life of Europe could be integrated.

No such thoughts even enter the heads of these business men headed by Sir John Wardlaw-Milne. Their record is sufficient indication of their quality. The "hard-faced business men, who did well out of the last war," brought pressure to bear on Mr. Lloyd George in Paris to stop the bits of sanity that he might otherwise have inserted into Versailles. They were contemptuous of measures that would have maintained the Weimar Republic and prevented Hitler coming to power. When the Nazis grew strong they forgot their fears of Germany, aided German rearmament, supported the appeasement policy which culminated at the date of Hitler's march to Prague in the F.B.I.'s agreement at Dusseldorf to work with German business in competition with the U.S.A. To-day they propose to repeat their performance and have begun by once more cashing in on the passions which German brutality have raised. If, as they hope, they can dominate German business and industry after the war, the results may not be so very different from those envisaged in the Nazi-British Big Business Agreement of 1939. After a time they would find that German industrialists were really very good fellows with whom they could collaborate. They would easily be persuaded of this through their fear of the increasing influence of the Soviet Union. The third world war would be staged. These men do not represent the views of common people in England; they do not represent the best counsels in the British Government. They merely represent money. In their victory the dead would be mocked even more terribly than in 1919.

PACIFIC ENIGMA

In a speech delivered early this month at Manila, the Japanese Prime Minister, Tojo, is reported to have said that Japan is "now ready to deal a thorough and crushing blow" against the United Nations. Two views as to the significance and purpose of this threat are tenable. It may have been simply a move in a Japanese campaign of "nerves" designed to make flesh creep in Washington and Canberra; the fact that German propagandists have recently been at some pains to emphasise the importance of Japan in Axis offensive plans lends colour to this interpretation. On the other hand the possibility cannot be excluded that Japan has not yet reached the end of her aggressive operations, and that Tojo's bombast points in fact to the likelihood of a recrudescence of Japanese military or naval activity in the Pacific theatre of war. The choice between these two possible interpretations will depend largely on the reading of Japanese strategy and apparent intentions during the past eighteen months of war.

When the Japanese decided to extend the scope of their "incident" in China and to launch hostilities in the South-Western Pacific against the colonies and dependencies of the United States, Britain and Holland, it seems safe to conclude that they had two alternative objectives. One—the minimal short-term plan—was the conquest and consolidation of territories whose possession would make Japan reasonably self-sufficient in raw materials and would make it difficult for the formidable adversaries whom she had challenged to bring to bear in counter-offensive action their ultimately overwhelming potential resources. The other—the long range but immediately optional plan—was to extend the so-called "co-prosperity sphere" under Japanese hegemony to include both India and (less certainly, but not improbably) all or part of Australia and New Zealand. If we suppose that some time in April, 1942, the Japanese Government decided to postpone the second, more ambitious scheme and to review its prospects when they were in a position to see how far the end of the European war had left the contestants exhausted and how far the political situation both in India and China itself had "ripened" to Japanese advantage, the course of Japanese operations during the past eighteen months and, more particularly, the sudden, apparent "switch" in their offensive after the fifth month of hostilities becomes intelligible.

By the end of March, 1942, Japan had overrun Malaya and the Dutch East Indies; Rangoon had fallen, and the British garrison of Burma had begun its long withdrawal northwards to the India frontier. In the Philippines, the remnants of the American forces were making their last stand in the Bataan Peninsula; and the Japanese navy, having secured the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, was reconnoitring in force in the Bay of Bengal. At this stage it looked as though the east coast of India might soon be the scene of Japanese landings; indeed, early in April Japanese naval forces with carrier-borne aircraft operated against Ceylon, but this penetration into Indian waters was brief. Some Allied ships were sunk by raiders or submarines between Calcutta and Madras, but the attack on Ceylon was not pressed home, nor did the Japanese seek out, or apparently desire, a major naval engagement in the Indian Ocean. After a single foray in strength their fleet apparently retired to Singapore or farther east; and though operations to secure the whole of Burma continued, and were not eventually concluded until mid-May, the Japanese gave every appearance of having set a deliberate limit temporarily to their western expansion. They had closed the road through Burma into China, thus completing the isolation of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's forces from outside material assistance; and with the attainment of that objective in the west they turned their attention eastwards to New Guinea and the Solomons. In both those directions their initial penetration was checked by Australian and American counter-attacks.

Is it to be supposed from this that the limit of Japanese expansion has been reached and that the intention of the Japanese High Command is henceforth to remain passively on the defensive? That would be an unsafe assumption. So far as India is concerned, little can be inferred one way or another from the Japanese reaction to the British incursion into Arakan which began last December and has now ended with a British withdrawal back to the frontier. The British

objective was apparently the limited one of wresting the small port of Akyab from the Japanese and a force of only modest size was evidently employed. The Japanese counter-attacked in sufficient force to repulse this foray, but there is no indication of any immediate Japanese intention to invade India through Chittagong. The Japanese were well aware that Akyab is not a doorway into Burma, and their counter-attack was presumably designed to demonstrate for prestige purposes that their hold on all parts of Burma and the Burma Road was secure. In the South-West Pacific, however, it seems unlikely that the Japanese will consider that they can afford to leave matters as they now stand. They have not yet "masked" Australia completely, or so interrupted communications between the sub-continent and the United States as to prevent Australia being used as a base for an eventual major counter-offensive against the southern limitrophe bastions of the "co-prosperity sphere." There is thus sufficient reason on strategic grounds why the Japanese should want both to extend their occupation of the Pacific islands south-eastwards and to clear the Australian forces from Papua. Occupation of Timor gives the Japanese a jumping-off place for an attack on Port Moresby from the west, and it may be of significance that there have been recent reports of renewed Japanese aerial activity both against Port Darwin and over Merauke on the south coast of New Guinea. The Japanese are also reported to have established an additional base on the north coast of New Guinea at Wewak, a port less accessible to Allied bombers than Lae and Salamoa. This suggests that they may be concentrating forces for an endeavour to re-occupy Guadalcanal and push on to New Caledonia and the Fiji Islands. Incidentally, it is worth remembering that, apart from the strategic value of denying to the Allies as many island bases as possible between Australia and Hawaii, there are valuable chrome and nickel deposits in New Caledonia which Japan needs to make good in metals her pre-war deficiences.

Knowing the situation which they will have to face at the end of the European war, the Japanese have so far shown no inclination to stake too many counters on a single throw. They did not risk their battle fleet in the Indian Ocean, nor is there any evidence that capital ships (other than aircraft carriers) were used in the task forces which attacked the Pacific Islands. Furthermore, they have consistently made the most economical use of their land forces. Out of a mobilised army whose strength may be put at two million men, probably little more than 10 per cent. has so far been engaged simultaneously in active operations, and certainly less than a quarter of the army is now employed in garrisoning Burma and the South Pacific. With military operations in China more or less at a standstill, Japan (provided that she keeps the peace with the U.S.S.R.) is not faced with any military man-power problem; and, though it seems unlikely that the military authorities in Tokio would welcome the establishment of a long land front in Australia, Japan could well afford to send substantial reinforcements of troops to the South Pacific without drawing seriously on her main concentrations in China and Manchuko. On the other hand, tempting though it must be for Japan to extend eastwards through the islands of the Southern Pacific the periphery of the defences of her new "co-prosperity sphere," offensive operations against either the Solomons or New Caledonia and the Fiji Islands would involve on a large scale the use of shipping in which Japanese resources are limited. That indeed may prove to be the factor which will curtail Japanese ambitions.

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A LONDON DIARY

As the rumours—soon perhaps to be more than rumours—of Axis demoralisation accumulate, our minds inevitably turn, even if prematurely, to 1918. The predominant thought was superbly put by Day Lewis in a poem published in this journal on May 1st.

Will it be so again— . . .
A Poppy Wreath for the Slain
And a cut-throat world for the living? that stale imposture
Played on us once again?
And our answer is his answer.
Call not upon the glorious dead
To be your witnesses then.
The living alone can nail to their promise the ones who said
It shall not be so again.

That is the real issue that arises behind Party manoeuvres and much anti-Party feeling. That again is the question that will predominate in the minds of all sincere people at the Labour Party Conference at Whitsun. Many, who cannot swallow the absolutism of the Communist Party as now constituted, are tormented by the fear that the Labour Party after this war will do no more than throw poppies on the graves of the slain, and prove, with the best will in the world, powerless to "nail to their promise the ones who said it will not be so again." And that is not a matter of sentiment and good will.

* * *

I wonder how many people, who have been agitated on the question of Communist affiliation, have noticed now that the Whitsuntide Labour Conference agenda is out that the affiliation resolution which is to be moved by the miners would not, in fact, mean affiliation even if it were carried? For the miners ask that the Conference will accept Communist affiliation if the Executive is satisfied that the Communist Party will loyally abide by the constitution of the Labour Party. Of the essence of the case that is just what the Communists cannot do. By their own constitution their loyalty to the Comintern comes first, and the Executive would be certain to declare itself unsatisfied about this condition of affiliation. But this stage will not, I gather, arise, since the Communists seem unlikely to be able to get within several hundred thousand of the required majority. This will make all the more interesting the explanation which Harold Laski will presumably have to give of the failure of the Executive to send the mission to Moscow. He promised such a delegation on behalf of the Executive at the last Labour Party Conference. It is obviously of the greatest possible importance nationally as well as internationally that realistic conversation should take place with Stalin. Unity is as essential as the Communists declare it to be; but only Moscow, it seems to me, could bring it about. I should doubt whether a Labour mission ought to leave for Moscow until an offensive which Stalin can really regard as a Second Front has actually begun. But that should mean a Labour delegation for Moscow within the next few months.

* * *

This week, four candidates were named for the job of Treasurer to the Labour Party: Herbert Morrison, Arthur Greenwood, W. G. Hall and Frank Pakenham. Hall will be supported by the Miners' Federation; Greenwood will, I expect, get the engineers' vote; Pakenham has won a justified reputation as second in command to Sir William Beveridge, but has scarcely the standing in the Party for this post, and I hear that he is not after all a candidate. Herbert Morrison cannot stand for both the Executive and the Treasurership and he will therefore not be on the Executive at all unless he becomes Treasurer. Morrison's position is now the most interesting in the Party. Whereas Ernest Bevin has so strongly advocated the continuance of the National Government after the war that he has given the impression of preferring Churchill's ticket to the Labour Party (if the choice shall arise), Morrison has specifically declared that he is in any case sticking to the Party. His recent speeches are much the ablest and best thought out that have been made by any British statesman recently (some of them are now published by the Cambridge University Press at 6d. under the title of *Prospects and Policies*). They strike everyone as a highly intelligent bid for leadership by an able man who is prepared to work in a National Government after the war, but on condition that the Government is a coalition in which Labour co-operates on terms. Morrison is handicapped by unpopularity with some of the big Trade Unions. He is also much criticised by many who say that he proves in practice unable to suit the action to the word. In February, 1940, for instance, he made perhaps the best speech ever made about the organisation of industry in the war; he became Minister of Supply a few months later, but in office he did not, perhaps from lack of industrial experience, manage to carry out his own recommendations. As Home Secretary he is admittedly the best administrator since Winston Churchill occupied that office, but his remarks to a deputation which urged him to save the lives of some refugee Jewish children so shocked the peers and clerics and distinguished non-party people present, that they never ceased to speak of it. I hear that he is deputed by the Executive to wind up the debate on the Party truce.

* * *

None of the candidates talked about so far to succeed Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy seem to me to have much to commend them. Attlee would be the worst choice. He is more reactionary on India than many avowed imperialists; he seems never to have got over, or indeed to have understood, the animosity which Indians showed to the Simon Commission of which he was a member. Nor would Attlee be strong enough to stand up to the powerful official hierarchy which we call the Government of India. Sir Archibald Sinclair is full of charm and good will, but not nearly strong enough for the post. Sir Samuel Hoare, for all his record, would be better for this job. He has some feeling for human rights, as he showed over his Prison Bill (which I hope will be revived, with improvements, when the war is over), and on India he has on the whole a progressive record; he piloted the Government of India Act through the House and he knows something of the administrative problems. He would be much the least bad of the three. The best available Viceroy would be an Indian like Sapru, who stands a little above the battle and who is generally respected.

* * *

People who were disturbed to learn from this journal last week that the independence of Nuffield College was in doubt, will hear with no less alarm that the Agricultural Institute at Oxford is also threatened. Under C. S. Orwin this Institute has done invaluable work. I hear that the Ministry of Agriculture's present line is that it will not find the money for an organisation with an independent director; it will only pay for pieces of work on particular jobs. This is the same game that is being played with Nuffield. It means that if a research organisation begins to discover facts or to draw deductions that do not fit the Ministry's pre-concerted plans, their money can be stopped. Which is quite an effective turn of the totalitarian screw.

* * *

One result of the war is to make quite apparently normal people go crackers. I ran into a well-known professor who has an unusually good knowledge of the Continent. He is slightly deaf and our voices were raised. We discussed Jews and the cause of anti-Semitism. Suddenly a man whom neither of us knew came up and said very politely: "Excuse me, but many of us are worried about the Jews in the House of Lords." "In the Lords?" I echoed, "but there are not many there." "Oh no," he said, "very few indeed." "Disraeli?" my friend murmured. "Oh!" said our new acquaintance, "he was a

very fine man." He was not, it seemed, objecting to any particular Jews in the Lords or outside it. "But," he said, "I think that Jews ought to have a House of Lords of their own!"

* * *

Propaganda takes odd forms. In a German talk to Eire which I happened to hear the other day the speaker, with an American accent, announced himself as an Irish Catholic. His subject was the bestiality of the Jews. To convince Catholic Irish listeners (most of them have never met a Jew) he quoted adverse comments on the Jews by three authors. Would you believe it? The authorities he quoted were Jesus Christ, Martin Luther and Voltaire! CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Constance Hobley.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The public, who are invited with the King's approval, to express their thanks to the Almighty on Sunday, will not omit to include in their prayers a realisation that the African story, through all its ups and downs, bears traces of the miraculous. — *Daily Telegraph.*

The Mayoress opened the proceedings with the announcement that their target was £8,000. She urged everyone to lend quickly or it would be too late, for the war was coming to an end.—*Grimsby Evening Telegraph.*

Dunfermline has surpassed all its previous salvage achievements by smashing its book drive target of 100,000. That total had been reached by Friday morning, and last night the figure soared to 123,456.

Dean of Guild Kirkhope, Convener of the Town Council's Cleansing Committee, and Mr. A. H. Duncan, sanitary inspector, helped by a large body of willing workers, took as their slogan—"There are only two books worth keeping—your Bible and your bank-book."—*Sunday Post* (Glasgow).

COTTAGE IN THE AIR

[In the House of Commons Mr. De la Bere asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that at the present time four or more Ministries are interested in, and dealing with, the proposals for the erection of farm cottages for agricultural workers, he will give an assurance that effective co-ordination is being maintained, in view of the urgent national necessity for the speedy erection of these cottages?]

THREE thousand token cottage homes
On sites of rustic charm
Were planned to house, come harvest time,
Our agricultural arm;
First fruits of building policy
To meet an urgent need,
Sign of official energy
And Departmental speed.

The M O A's State cottages
Appeared upon the plan,
The M O W rounded off
What the M O H began;
But the M O S and M O L
Refused priority,
And the cottage homes were pigeon-holed
For the M O T C P.

The Rural District Councils soon
Reported with alarm
The dearth of suntrap cottages
For workers on the farm—
No cottages come Lady Day,
None by Midsummer's date;
Come harvest-home, come Michaelmas,
Come Christmas, they were late.

Nor, yet come Doomsday will they build
Three thousand shadow cotts;
(With all mod; con; and comf. accomm;
For agricultural tots)
Till the M O W, M O A,
And M O H agree
With the M O S, and M O L
And M O T C P. SAGITTARIUS

AMERICAN LABOUR

[Mr. Creech Jones, M.P., is Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour. He recently returned from a visit to the United States.]

THE recent T.U.C. delegation to the United States was unable to persuade the A.F. of L. that steps should be taken for the inclusion in the Anglo-American Trade Union Committee of other important American organisations such as the C.I.O. The C.I.O. represents many of the powerful industrial unions. That Congress had already shown strong feeling that their co-operation in any international collaboration should depend on the grace of the A.F. of L. It resented the insufficient recognition paid to it. The recent discussions have had the effect, if anything, of worsening the relations between the two American bodies.

The internal divisions of the American labour movement can be bridged only by the Americans themselves. The British delegates never thought otherwise. The C.I.O. was puzzled, however, as to why British Labour had permitted a situation to arise whereby the initiative to secure the C.I.O. its place in international collaboration had passed to the A.F. of L. It was unconvinced by arguments that the A.F. of L. was the one recognised American centre affiliated to the I.F.T.U. It asserted that its membership was not less than that of the A.F. of L. It said that while there may exist rivalry for membership in certain big industries, its membership is composed, in the main, of persons previously unorganised and unorganisable by the American Federation of Labour. Its centre of industrial unions is complementary to the American Federation, the centre mainly of craft unions. Even if the early C.I.O. movement was a breakaway from the A.F. of L., to-day it is composed of unions in the newer mass production and heavy industries. These unions play a large and indeed the major part in war production—in motor construction, electrical apparatus, steel, rubber, oil, aluminium, etc. If, therefore, the workers of America and Britain feel that co-operation between the organised movements of both countries is important, the C.I.O. should be treated with the same respect and consideration as the British T.U.C. has given to the A.F. of L.

Other reasons have been advanced for direct association with the British movement. First, collaboration with the T.U.C. is also a step to wider collaboration with the workers of the U.S.S.R. and that is preferable to a joint committee limited to the C.I.O. and Russian Trade Unions. Second, it is desirable that the organised workers in America should not again think in terms of economic nationalism or merely of activity in terms only of the American continent. They should think in the wider concepts of world economic co-operation which is imperative for progress after the war. The C.I.O., conscious that time is running short, therefore asks how long the A.F. of L. is to block the road.

There is no hopeful prospect that the two organisations will, at any early date, achieve unity. Efforts were made quite recently and broke down. The differences remain unreconciled, and artificial unity is worse than useless. There is, nevertheless, some effective collaboration between the two organisations. They sit together on local and national advisory boards concerned with manpower, production, labour policy, etc. William Green and Philip Murray serve under the President on an advisory Labour Policy committee. They have agreed to take common action to defeat the threatened anti-labour legislation. The two centres are considering together the economic problems emerging in the war and a policy for American Labour in the wider field when reconstruction becomes possible. Most of the collaboration is under the authority of the President. It is recognised that the war of the United States must be won and the President's reforms sustained. For the A.F. of L., however, that is a different matter from participating, in the international field, with a rival whose disruptive tactics and militancy have already prejudiced the older federation at home and abroad; or, on the other hand, of associating on an Anglo-Soviet Committee with Russians who are not representatives of a free trade union movement. The Anglo-American Committee has now been renamed the A.F.L.–T.U.C. Committee. To-day, it seems that the C.I.O. and the Railway Brotherhoods are unlikely to serve as part of the American side of an all-embracing Committee. It is this situation which the T.U.C. will have to consider at its next annual meeting.

The internal politics of American trade unionism are confusing to the outsider. The A.F. of L. is often spoken of disparagingly because of its narrow and inadequate conceptions of organisation, its conservatism and typically traditional American conception of social policy. Complaints are heard of the doubtful practices of some of its Unions and their association with employers and political reactionaries yet many of the unions have built up good industrial relations and have contributed to the stability and efficiency of American industry. The A.F. of L. also performs valuable social and educational work. The C.I.O., in contrast, is more militant. It is manned by younger men. It takes a large and forceful view of its responsibilities. Its trade union policy is tempered in the present emergency by the national needs. It has engaged able men and attaches importance to educational effort and democratic organisation and leadership. It is alert and is handling with skill the almost incredible problems produced by the rapid expansion of war industry. It must be confessed that it is difficult to know whether its membership is near that of the A.F. of L. or whether it is keeping the members it makes. It is often asserted that "left" elements carry too great an influence in its councils. But its powerful support to the President's national and United Nations' policy, and its influence among the workers make it a factor which has to be reckoned with in a changed America.

More intriguing, perhaps, is the position of the United Mine Workers. John Lewis, its leader, remains an enigma. His anti-Roosevelt policy, his isolationism, his recent attempts to organise workers in other industries besides mining drives him farther from the C.I.O. He cares little for the no-strike policy and wage policy adopted in the national emergency by the other unions. His latest demand for a 10s. a day increase to the miners has threatened the whole national scheme. There are stories that his manoeuvres may yet see him linked with the A.F. of L. His personality is dynamic but without a complete reversal of his present purpose and policy, his leadership may prove disastrous to American Labour and severely react on American politics and national policy.

The A.F. of L. and C.I.O. have already played a big part in mobilising the country for war. They reduced the use of the strike and refused to exploit the emergency by forcing up wages. They have insisted on price stabilisation. They are, however, opposed to all forms of labour conscription or of tying men to their jobs. There is much confusion and ground for concern in the man-power situation in America. The Unions will not endorse the conscription of labour in the absence of adequate provision for welfare and essential amenities. Why should they, they ask, while Congress refuses to put a ceiling on incomes above 25,000 dollars, and while big business is able to profit and to wield such great power in the life of the nation?

The Unions are aware of the present waste and muddle in man-power and of the importance of maintaining priority services and industries. The problem of the war effort, of course, can only be understood in the light of past social and economic development in the vastness of America. The New Deal policy released elements in the national life which still challenge the old individualism that remains embedded in the thought and practice of the United States. For the individual worker is turning to social action and to combination to protect him. At the same time, most employers feel that if trade unionism must be recognised the implications of recognition must be evaded wherever possible. To big business

trade unionism is a challenge to its prerogatives and a restraint that curbs its will—a nuisance which prevents it from doing what it likes with its own. This same attitude obtrudes itself in discussion on social security and the adaptation of the national life to meet the strains of economic crisis and the war. Anything savouring of collectivism, of governmental planning and organisation is by its very origin wrong. But the economic and social adaptations since the great slump have already gone too far to make restoration of the pre-1929 order possible.

Many business men are apprehensive about the future. They talk of the problems of transfer of industry from war to peace production, of the maintenance of output after the war in expanded factories, of protection and price levels, and the difficulties of recovering lost markets. These things produce a scepticism as to whether beyond the war a healthy economic order can be made possible. Coupled with these fears is the prospect of continued Federal regulation and control, a dislike of Federal initiative and enterprise, the New Deal, labour codes and trade union authority. Employers ask whether their industries will be adequately protected against the exploitation of Lend-Lease after the war, whether factories created by the war abroad or established in the aftermath will not be used to destroy post-war American enterprise in those countries, and whether the freer flow of goods by reducing trade barriers will expose American manufacturers to unfair strains. Meantime, for the employers the going is generally good, but it is considerations such as these which makes it important that the policy of the American trade unions should be understood and that American labour should be encouraged to collaborate with the British unions in the liberal work of reconstruction after the war.

A. Creech Jones.

EUROPE'S UNDERGROUND PRESS

[The writer of this article is also author of *Europe's Free Press*, published in 1943 by Sidgwick & Jackson.]

I have talked recently with the editors of five underground newspapers. They have produced thousands of copies of lively, up-to-date journals, under the very nose of their German overlords, but eventually they were forced to escape to England. *Pantagruel* and *Valmy* appeared in France, *Vi Vil Oss et Land* (We Want Our Own Country) in Norway, *V Boj* (Into Arms) in Czechoslovakia, *La Libre Belgique* in Belgium.

The Germans insisted upon a military censorship for Belgian newspapers in May, 1940, but matters really came to a head when a lawsuit in the Seventh Chamber of the Commercial Court of Brussels, brought to light some odd facts. It revealed that Raymond de Becker, a well-known adventurer, had been placed in charge of the Brussels paper *Le Soir*. He was given this job by the Chief of the Propaganda Division of Brussels, Propaganda Staffel B—acting on instruction from the German authorities.

Belgian journalists and editors quickly answered the situation. Editors resigned, journalists found some other way of earning a living, proprietors tried to withdraw the established names of their papers. In some cases the proprietors fought the Nazis to the last ditch, and at least two of them gave their lives rather than see their paper reduced to Nazi propaganda sheets. This happened in the case of De Hasque, owner of the Flemish paper *Gazet van Antwerpen*, who was arrested and eventually died in a concentration camp. Peeters, too, the director of the Belga Agency, died in prison.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, a daring band of patriots, with several writers amongst them, remembered the tradition of *La Libre Belgique* in the last war and finally, on the fifteenth of August, 1940, the paper came to life again. By July, 1942, it had reached a circulation of thirty thousand. To-day its circulation appears to be somewhat higher than that.

There are no less than 150 underground newspapers published in Belgium. The majority of them were duplicated in the beginning. To-day, many of them are printed and carry the unmistakable stamp of the professional journalist. Each faction has its representative paper from the Socialistic *L'Espoir*, *Combattre* and *Le Monde du Travail*, to the Communistic *Les Temps Nouveaux*, *Clarté*, *Le Drapeau Rouge* and *La Jeunesse Nouvelle*. Belgium is unique in one respect. It even has a special underground paper for women, *La Voix des Femmes*.

The Netherlands have played a considerable part in the underground press of Europe. *Het Parool* (The Parole), Holland's leading underground paper, reached a circulation of roughly five thousand copies recently, and a readership of 100,000. *Het Parool's* motto comes from the Dutch national anthem—"I will remain faithful to my fatherland till the death."

The editor is extremely well informed about the private affairs of the different political factions struggling to make the most of the German occupation. For instance, when the *Nationaal Socialistische Beweging*, the Dutch Nazi Party in Holland led by Mussert, began to quarrel with the smaller *Nationaal Socialistische Nederlandsche Arbeit Partij*, under the renegade Major Kruijs, *Het Parool* suddenly came out with a remarkable article, giving, in detail, the plans for a very hush-hush meeting which *N.S.B.* thought was known to its inner circle alone. It caused a considerable stir. It shook the *N.S.B.* rather badly.

The various German attempts at financial manipulation are also ruthlessly exposed in *Het Parool* by someone very familiar with the deceptive intricacies of Nazi economies. Quislings, again, go in fear of the little paper. It has an uncanny flair for digging out their next bit of betrayal. Even German moves are sometimes announced some days before, in the columns of *Het Parool*.

When it looked as though Mussert, head of the chief Nazi party, would be given considerable power in Holland, *Het Parool* came out with a powerful appeal for a general strike should such a catastrophe really happen. Whether or not the Germans took heed of this warning, in the next reshuffle of power they managed to overlook Mussert.

France has thirty underground newspapers circulating to-day. *Pantagruel*, the father of them all, was unique in some respects. You came upon comments like this in its columns: "England, let us not forget, has declared that her war aims include the re-establishment of the integral territory of France. That is why we look forward to her victory, though not necessarily to the humiliation of the German people whose talent nobody ignores . . . We shall thus constrain ourselves to avoid any spiteful or bitter criticism of the Germans . . ."

Unusual sentiments amongst the general tendency to ruthlessness. There was an equal breadth about their comments on Oran, Dakar and the English raids generally.

> If we admit that the English are fighting for us at the same time as for themselves, which is indeed the fact, they are no more to be blamed than our own soldiers, who blew up our bridges or destroyed our fortresses. That is one of the unhappy necessities inherent in war, and one can only judge them impartially, by recalling the reasons which govern the acts . . .

Pantagruel eventually reached a readership of ten thousand, and then, one day, the editor was arrested and shot.

Paul Simon, ex-editor of *Valmy*, began duplicating his underground newspaper with a child's printing set. It took them a whole month to print off the first issue. There were just fifty copies in the beginning, but they passed from hand to hand until their effect was out of all proportion to their number. Before Simon left France *Valmy* had become a printed wartime paper, with a readership in the neighbourhood of 100,000.

The developing nerve centres of resistance in France have put across some magnificent bits of effrontery. One in particular, fluttered the Nazi dovecotes. Almost overnight isolated newspapers and underground units brought themselves into contact with one another, and a scattered system of resistance suddenly cohered. By underground channels they began to co-ordinate their activities.

Nor did it stop there. They proceeded to produce their own charter, something on the lines of the Atlantic Charter. The terms were smuggled to London and covered five main points. The Vichy regime must go; France must recover complete sovereignty and integrity at home and in the Empire: retribution must follow for damage to French rights and interests; there must be guarantees to render France's traditional invader incapable of further aggression; France would remain faithful to her republican and democratic ideals.

There was a somewhat reactionary taste about the charter. It was also, inevitably, nationalistic. But circumstances were harsh enough to have produced a far more extreme document. To-day the three largest underground news-sheets in France—*Franc-Tireur*, *Liberation* and *Combat*—each print 60,000 to 80,000 copies every fortnight.

Across in Norway, the underground newspaper with the biggest circulation is *Fri Fagbevegelu*, the organ of the underground Trade Union leaders. There are some 350,000 trade unionists in Norway to-day, and *Fri Fagbevegelse* puts their point of view, but always as part of the total national effort against the invader. There is a united front amongst the underground newspapers of Norway. They want their Labour Prime Minister back under the ægis of King Haakon.

Recently there were some twelve widely circulating secret papers, apart from innumerable smaller ones. *Eidsvold*, *Kongs Posten* (The Royal Post), *Tidens Tegn* (The Sign of the Times), *Vi Vil Oss et Land*, *Fri Fagbevegelse*, *Alt for Norge* and *Radio-Avisen* are some of them.

Yugoslavia has a pretty good selection of free papers ranging from *Svoboda Ali Smrt* (Freedom or Death) a Slovene paper, to *Slovenski Porocevalec*, representing the Communists. There was one audacious feature common to all Yugoslavia's underground newspapers in the early days. They carried the official censorship stamp of their particular section of the country. The official censors tried to stop this practice by changing their stamps from time to time. Within a few days the underground press had changed theirs too, and always it was an exact replica.

The Czechoslovak clandestine paper, *V Boj*, was in existence before the war, and was fortunate enough to have an elaborate network of distribution before the Gestapo came into the field. When the country was overrun, the whole organisation went underground and continued to function with amazing success. There were small time shopkeepers who risked their meagre livelihood to wrap goods in copies of *V Boj*, milkmen who pushed copies under doorways as they delivered the morning milk, waitresses who gave you a copy with the bill. The work of *V Boj* fired the imagination of the ordinary Czech citizen. The inspiration behind it all was forty-four-year-old Josef Skalda.

The first issue of *V Boj*, following the German occupation, was a four-paged affair decorated with the old Hussite weapons and the white lion of Bohemia. Oddly enough the paper operated without any trouble for nearly eleven months. But they caught Skalda in the end and shot him.

Czechoslovakia's underground press wants the old coalition government back in power, the Government drawn from five or six parties—Conservatives, Industrialists, Catholics, Liberals and Social Democrats. There are also Communist stirrings, but they do not appear to be very extensive. Benes, it is understood, would remain President.

It is difficult enough producing newspapers under wartime restrictions in free Britain, but it seems something near a miracle that these papers reach circulations up to fifty thousand in German occupied Europe. How do they get the paper?

One stock trick began with a girl clerk "losing" a roll of paper in the books of the company. It virtually ceased to exist so far as the paper com-

any was concerned. Then it was whisked away, after office hours, in a lorry to a railway siding. There they affixed the name and address of somebody in, say, Paris, who could legitimately buy paper. It was driven to his offices or factory and transferred after dark to one of the rooms where the "underground newspapermen" worked. Underground traffic of this kind goes on continually in the occupied countries.

VINCENT BROME

STOREHOUSE OF THE PAST

ACUTE shortage of paraffin oil for use in lamps took the people of Donegal back almost a century within the past few months. This winter, as in the days of their forefathers, they were forced to depend on the glow of the open peat fire for their chief source of lighting.

Neighbourliness is strong among the farmers of Donegal, whose little cottages lie scattered like white shells wherever a fertile foot of ground can be found among the uncompromising mountains. And so, as the days drew in, the neighbours gathered early about the half-shadowed hearth to while away the long winter evenings with a good "crack."

In such an atmosphere was fostered the old Irish art of story telling, when ancient legends were handed down, and the proverbs and the folklore of an earlier people became woven into the fabric of the Irish mind.

Some of the stories told are as old as the Odyssey, and older. Some of the jokes which the peasants of Donegal still laugh over of a winter evening were hoary chestnuts in medieval times.

For Ireland is a storehouse of the past, and in its traditions and oral literature can be traced the early days of mankind. Donegal in particular is steeped in folklore, especially in the Gaeltacht, the Congested Area, where the minute fields lie like a patchwork quilt over the barren mountainside, tortuously sub-divided to the last boulder. Here the people have clung fiercely to their spiritual heritage, their language and their traditions, for they have little else.

Within sight and sound of modern civilisation, this mountain-encircled region has remained one of the richest storehouses of an ancient Ireland which dates back to centuries before Christ. The traditions and beliefs of the peasants there, and many of their customs, have come down in an unbroken line from their pagan ancestors, the Eastern peoples who first populated the northern seaboard of Ireland.

A dramatic struggle against time and change is going on from day to day in the Gaeltacht itself, and one of the concerns of the Free State Government is to collect and preserve this valuable historical material before it is too late. I spent some time with a young man who is a native of Donegal, employed by the Irish Folklore Commission to collect the traditions, customs, and lore of this "hidden" Ireland, which exists in the minds and the habits of the people, but which is dying out every year as the old people die and the young ones become "enlightened."

Under his guidance, the lovely sea-girt parish of Cloghaneely became a strange territory, half medieval, half pagan, inhabited by giants and fairies, with familiar saints merely camouflaged pagan gods.

With the proper clues, the household phrases used by the fishermen and farmers to-day point directly back to the dark and turgid times when Baal was the god worshipped in the mountains of Donegal, and when the sacrificial fire flamed from the hilltops. Within the parish of Cloghaneely there is a hillock crowned by a flat stone. The township in which it is situated is known as Baltoney. Baal's hill—the hill where Baal was worshipped. An old man quarrying about there not long ago found parts of a pagan statue made of stone.

More intangible but more enduring relics of Baal worship existed in those mountains until as recently as 50 years ago, when people used to take a lighted coal with them when leaving the house at night. They thought it was merely to guard against the wee folk, and as devout Catholics, would have been shocked to learn that they were perpetuating a pagan practice. And to-day in Donegal, where it is becoming fashionable to scoff at the wee folk even, the men still carry fire with them by lighting up their pipes before leaving the house at night.

When a death occurs in the township of Teelin, the little fishing village on the west coast of Donegal, it is never said that the person concerned has died. The neighbours pass on the news by saying that So and So "sailed last night." The phrase was used without any knowledge of its origin, until by chance came the discovery that a familiar landmark in the parish, a mound of huge stones, had not been set there haphazardly, as was supposed. The stones were set in "ship shape," as a vessel a-sail. It was found to be a prehistoric burial mound. The belief that when people died they sailed off to another land has disappeared from that district, but the phraseology has remained, coming down in the mouths of the people for over 4,000 years.

The peasants of Donegal do not to-day practice the elaborate rite at the conclusion of their harvests which was known as "chasing the callyach" (witch or hare). But they still have a lurking belief that the one whose harvest is left last will come under the influence of an evil eye, and so even now when a farmer hurries to gather in his potatoes or corn before his neighbour, he says that he is "chasing the callyach." (The Irish spelling is caileach.)

No one in the Gaeltacht would take a spinning wheel out at night, even from one neighbour to another, for fear fairies will come and take it from them. At night, too, the women take the bands off the wheel to prevent the fairies from spending the night spinning on it.

Some of the most fascinating customs relate to childbirth, and the midwife, or "banglun" (which literally means "handywoman"), is full of superstitions. Even to-day when a man has to go for the nurse or the doctor, he never likes to go alone in case the fairies might come and lead him astray, for the fairies are always waiting for a newborn child. Another precaution for keeping the fairies at a safe distance is to keep throwing oatmeal or salt over the bed when a woman is in labour.

There is a practice known as "the time of the carrying of the water." When a woman is brought to labour the women of the place get a bottomless tub. They set it outside the door and get the woman's husband to carry water to fill it. He pours the pail of water into the tub, then goes back for more, until the baby is born. Old women have it that the man should be kept in labour the same time as the woman. (Or could it be just another method of keeping the man busy and out of the way?)

Relics of the ancient Brehan laws are still found in the unwritten code of behaviour in the Gaeltacht. A fisherman will divide a third of his catch among the widows of the neighbourhood. If there is a scarcity of milk in the district and someone has a cow giving milk, everyone in the district is entitled to his share. If a man keeps bees, one-third of the honey must go to the neighbour on either side, on the principle, presumably, that the bees used their fields as well as his.

ANITA ENGLE

NOEL COWARD

MR. NOEL COWARD is the most comprehensive *homme du théâtre* the English Stage has produced: he acts in his own plays, he directs them, and when music is required he writes his own. His nearest analogue on the French stage is Sacha Guitry. Certainly there are situations and a manner of handling dialogue which can be described as peculiarly his, but it is by no means always upon these that he relies when treating a theme. When it requires other qualities he knows what they are and is able to supply them. Of course, I do not assert that he could write any kind of play; I mean only that his range is far wider than his specific gifts would lead us to expect, and that he shows an unerring sense of the theatre in adapting not the theme to his talents, which might be fatal to a proper treatment of it, but his talents to the theme. This is well seen in the two plays now running simultaneously at the Haymarket and filling the theatre. *This Happy Breed* and *Present Laughter*, in order to be as successful dramatically as they undoubtedly are, each requires not only a different technique, but a different sense of humour, a different sense of proportion and a different emotional attitude towards human nature. The first requires realism and—shall we call it "heart"? Its theme is based on a sense of responsibility for the happiness of others and of loyalty not only to them but to the community. The second is flashing, brilliant comedy, as heartless towards tender emotions as a Restoration comedy—indeed, more gaily ruthless, for there is no pretty lip-service to the sentiments in it. There is, however, a core of seriousness. The focus is professional loyalty displayed in the midst of laughable exposures of the tribulations of the histrionic temperament and the extravagances of amorous lyricism. If *ira* is a *brevis furor*, what of *amor*? In *Present Laughter*, Noel Coward shows himself to be a psychologist, as thoroughly anti-amorist as Shaw himself, who has often delighted in exhibiting sex-passion as a flash in the pan, and therefore to be valued (except during his brief genetic superman period) only as a stimulant to the imagination. In *Present Laughter* there is a crank highbrow, admirably acted by the way by Mr. James Donald, who is made to refer constantly to Chehov in a most superior and superstitious manner. In these references I could not help reading myself a gay repost on the part of the dramatist to those who have thought Mr. Coward far too popular and flibbertigibbet to be reckoned a playwright of genuine penetration. I remember comparing him myself, years ago, to one of those water-spiders which push about on the surface of a stream, but never can get into the water, and wondering, rather patronisingly, what would happen as he grew older; what themes he could find after his effervescent brilliance had subsided, and his unerring ear for contemporary dialogue no longer concealed the—yes—the slightness of his themes. But there were two approaches by which he was destined to penetrate the amusing, sparkling surface of life on which he had skated with such agility. One was given him by war, which wakes a sense, however temporary, in all who feel, of a common devotion uniting all sorts of different men; the other his devotion to his own art—to everything connected with the stage. These, respectively, have supplied the themes of *This Happy Breed* and *Present Laughter*.

Both may be described as comedies, as in the former the treatment is also "light" and the upshot happy. But the key in which it is pitched is kindly, warm-hearted, matter-of-fact realism. Common unifying calamity has made him just as interested in suburban domestic human nature as in the emotional confusions of the lavish lives of pleasure-hunters. The clue to *This Happy Breed* is to be caught in two speeches of the hero, an ex-soldier of the last war and now a clerk in a tourist office (played with a careful subtlety by himself) the one addressed to his son, who has just made a fool of himself; the other, on which the final curtain falls, to his grandson, an infant in a perambulator. What is said on these occasions is an expression of a point of view from which the sorrows, disappointments, follies of life can be endured and excused—of the fundamental loyalties.

In *Present Laughter* the keynote is the indifference (comparatively) of the hero, a much-adored woman-pursued and pursuing popular actor, to everything except his profession. Again this part is played by Mr. Coward himself, and with a zest and brilliant rapidity which contrast with his careful and literal interpretation of Frank Gibbons in *This Happy Breed*. It is difficult to

say in which part he is most at home, though, doubtless, he is more intimately so in the former, where he extracts the last ounce of comedy from the confusions which result from the born-actor's habit of dramatising his emotions in real life, and from his not being able to live without the excitement and botheration of his success entails, curse them and fly from them though he may. And connected with this is the most ignominious exit of a leading lady from the stage I have ever seen. At the climax of the dénouement Joanna, for whom the hero reluctantly fell the night before, after calling him every name contemptuous fury could prompt, from "affected egomaniac," to "unmitigated cad" slaps his face; but Garry has been so staggered by hearing that his friends have engaged a theatre he dislikes (one of them, incidentally, is Joanna's husband) that he does not even turn his head as she rushes from the room. The love-duel between them which we witnessed in the previous act is a most exciting sex-duel with honesty as a weapon on his side and artful candour provocative on hers, each of them alluring the other more and more as they cross swords. It was a surprising treat to a lover of acting, too, to see Miss Judy Campbell, who had been such a perfect Mrs. Gibbons in *This Happy Breed*, so gauche, inarticulate and true, turning into an equally perfect vamp, "reeking," as the charmed Garry frantically resisting exclaims, with the lust of conquest. "And your mind, even more expertly groomed to vanquish than your body. . ." Every word, every phrase, every change of mood cunningly planned. Just the right amount of sex-antagonism mixed with subtle flattery, just the right switch over, perfectly timed, from provocative implication to wistful diffidence. . . . "Go —leave me alone." To which tirade Joanna laughingly replies, "Curtain." After that puncture so well directed, Garry has recourse to soda-water, and we know that she has won. To me it does not seem unlikely that *Present Laughter* will last as a comedy woven out of the histrionics and sincerities of the actor's calling. It was extremely well performed by the whole cast.

Just a concluding word or two about *This Happy Breed*. The thread which controls the puppet is, as I said, loyalty; this time not to an art, but to a tradition which is moral and national. It is a story which covers the between-war period, June, 1919, to June, 1939, about an ex-soldier and his family at Clapham Common. It is told in nine scenes divided into three acts. The characters, outside the Gibbons family (two girls and a boy), are a mother-in-law, his sister, a poor etiolated victim of the last war who lost her lover in it (with whom the former squabbles and wrangles), a couple of boys, and the hero's close friend and late comrade in arms, Fred. Beneath its humdrum suburban conviviality ("Cheerio," "Happy days," etc.) we are aware of the depth of this friendship. Subtle and pointful, too, is the development of his sister who from a hypochondriacal nuisance to herself and everybody else, becomes, thanks to a spiritual healer, a fairly happy active woman. But, alas, also one who is exasperatingly smug and thinks that everyone ought to swallow the religion which has cured her: that nothing painful or unpleasant really exists. The sparring between her and her brother, whose way of taking life is based on accepting things and the philosophy that they are what they are, is amusing. Frank is able to take things as they come, even his boy's death; and holding fast to the loyalties that alone matter, and accepting the fact that his eldest daughter is a silly little snob who must have a good time. His emotion when her true lover marries her in spite of her having flitted to the Riviera with a rich man is most moving. The play is full of touching moments as well as amusing ones. The cast act extremely well together. In the course of it we see Frank and Liz Gibbons growing old before our eyes. Their lives change, but not the rock on which they are founded. There is little dramatic suspense in it; it unfolds as a story rather than a play, but it is a story which reinforces faith in common human nature, as well as keeping our interest throughout.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE MOVIES

"Lenin in 1918," at the Tatler
"Hitler's Children," at the Regal
"On the Edge of Darkness," at Warner's

The biography of Lenin goes into a second volume at the Tatler. Contents: war with the Germans and the White Russians, bread shortage, Lenin haranguing, persuading, inspiring in Moscow, Stalin defending Tsaritsyn, attempt on Lenin's life, illness and convalescence, Stalin comes to see Lenin, the bread trains get through, rout of the Germans at Tsaritsyn. As in the earlier film the treatment is episodic; Lenin makes a speech to factory workers, and the camera remains fixed for long moments on the plump dynamic figure addressing its audience (a few English headlines drift through to us). The method succeeds, thanks again to a remarkable performance by B. V. Shchukin as Lenin. He not only looks the part exactly and knows all the attitudes, but by his energy captures the imagination as Muni did in *Emile Zola*. Some of the episodes are brilliantly done: the attempted assassination is the most dramatic point of the film, and the events leading up to and away from it are depicted with a realism and ease that would stagger us in any film made outside Russia. The good qualities of "Socialist Realism" —a stuffy doctrine when carried into the fields of painting or literature—here easily outweigh the bad. *Lenin in* 1918 and *Lenin in October* are considerable achievements in the cinema; but that should not blind us to the fact that fidelity to certain truths may be accompanied by an evasion or distortion of others. Trotsky, for example, then Commissar of War, is completely ignored in this film, and Stalin, though a "speaking likeness," has the impermeable glaze of sainthood. Lenin *may*, recovering from his bullet wounds, have insisted to Stalin: "In the face of interventionist and imperialist activity an iron-hard, a steel-like dictatorship will be necessary," but the remark coming pat has every appearance of a gloss. The relationship between the two men and the justification of subsequent policies is, of course, a main thread of the story and it is natural that the director, Mikhail Romm, should wish to make that thread as strong as possible. But he does so at the expense of making one of the chief characters a plaster image, and at the expense sometimes, one feels, of historical fact.

Hitler's Children and *On the Edge of Darkness* are two more sensational films of Nazi Europe. The first gives a picture of Hitler youth in Germany before the war, the second of the underground struggle in Norway. Neither is as wildly fabulous as last week's *Chetniks;* in fact, the material, especially of *Hitler's Children*, is authentic enough. The Nazi officials, however disagreeable, are human beings who can be understood; and *Hitler's Children* scores several points in choosing as its hero a captain in the Gestapo.

On the Edge of Darkness does not too badly by the Norwegians. A love story is stuck on to an authentic and exciting background, which includes the smuggling of arms and guerilla fighting that results in a whole town being blotted out, Norwegians, Nazis and all.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Old Foolishness," at the Arts Theatre

This is the first play of Irish Paul Vincent Carroll's to be performed in London. The Abbey Theatre, Dublin, now stars him, but had fought shy of him till he had the guarantee of a success in New York. *The Old Foolishness* has an admirable first act, a patchy though not ineffective second, and a bewilderingly incompetent third, redeemed only by one or two fine solo pieces of acting. Mr. Carroll's grip on a bold idea that was rich in theatre possibilities, appears to weaken: he ends up with farce and sentiment, and his characters forfeit their first solidity. The "old foolishness" is the romantic sexual urge, buried—according to Dan Dorian, who is at once clown, mystic and commentator—under the drabness, the social pettiness and the Catholic timidities of modern Ireland. Peter, the eldest of the three Sheeran brothers, should be immune from it: true to the Irish small farmer convention, he is on the eve of a "made" marriage to Rosemaryanne, who will bring in cattle and land. But, without warning, enters the fatal, bewildered Maeve, who has been living in Dublin with Peter's disgraceful brother, Francis, a gunman now on the run. For Tim, the third Sheeran, waiting to go to college, Maeve is the crystallisation of lyric dreams. For the unfortunate Peter she spells chaos. The Arts Theatre actors did well: on the whole they kept near the rhythm, if not the vowels, of Irish speech. If they did not quite fill their parts to capacity—and Mr. Michael Golden, as Peter, did fill his all the time—they used technique where race-intuition broke down. Miss Barbara Waring's Maeve and Miss Helen Lacy's Rosemaryanne were both excellent. Mr. Billy Shine's Dan Dorian, though amusing, was played a little too much in one key. The production did well with the difficult scene in the castle, and made what it could with the third act.

Correspondence

PLAIN SPEAKING

SIR,—In the Atlantic Charter the President and the Prime Minister say that "their countries seek no aggrandisement, territorial or other," "desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned," and "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live."

The Soviet Union signed the United Nations Pact in January, 1942, on the basis of the territories regarded by the Soviet Government as within the frontiers of the Soviet Union at the time it was attacked by Hitler, *i.e.*, June, 1941. There is nothing in the text of the Atlantic Charter or of the reference to it in the United Nations Pact which imposes legal obligation on any of the signatories to abandon any of the territories that were under their sovereignty at the time they became parties to the Charter and/or the Pact.

The Atlantic Charter no more imposes, or can reasonably be construed to impose, an obligation on the Soviet Union to surrender, or to allow plebiscites in, any of the territories which were part of the Soviet Union in June, 1941, than it imposes any such obligation on the United States with regard to the Philippines, or on the United Kingdom in respect of Burma or Malaya, or on the Netherlands to confer independence on the Dutch East Indies. There may be a good moral and political case for doing all of these things, but there is no legal obligation deriving from the Atlantic Charter, and it is time the question of the Soviet Union's western frontiers were considered in an atmosphere free from the confusion and cant introduced by this misconception.

Nor are the Soviet Government any more bound than the British Government to recognise the Polish-Soviet Riga Treaty frontier as still valid. In point of fact the British Government have made it clear again and again that whereas we are fighting to restore the national independence of the Polish, Czecho-slovak, and other oppressed peoples of Europe, we are not bound to restore pre-war frontiers anywhere. The special pledges given to France to restore her territorial integrity are the exception that proves the rule.

As for the moral and political case, the following facts are relevant: the Poles extorted the Riga Treaty frontier after a war of aggression waged against the U.S.S.R., and took territories east of Poland's ethnographic frontier (roughly the Curzon line) in the teeth of the Allies' advice and of the Allies' warning that they did so at their own responsibility and their own risk. The Poles jumped the claim to East Galicia by simply invading it, in spite of the Allies' statement that they were not prepared to hand over East Galicia to Poland unless the Poles gave it political autonomy —which they never did. The town and territory of Vilna were also taken through a military occupation that struck the first blow at the authority of the League of Nations.

The driving force behind these policies of aggression was the desire of the Polish landowners to recover their great estates in White Russia and East Galicia. The acquisition of these territories proved a curse to the infant Polish Republic. It strengthened the feudal-minded landowning element, who successfully

resisted land reform, contributed to the overthrow of democracy in Poland, and pushed their country into a megalomaniac attempt to play the role of a great power in Central Europe, abandoning the policies of collective security in favour of amateurish attempts to hold the balance of power between Germany and Russia, and to be "realistic" by joining Hitler at Munich in despoiling Czechoslovakia of Teschen. It was this landowner element also that was responsible for the failure of Polish attempts to solve the problem of their great White Russian and Ukrainian minorities.

It is foolish to imagine that, even if we could impose such a solution on the U.S.S.R., which we cannot, there could be any peace or security in Eastern Europe if some millions of the White Russian and Ukrainian peasantry were again to be separated by an artificial and arbitrary frontier line from their brethren in the White Russian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics, and if the land assigned to them by the Soviet regime were to be taken away from them and restored to Polish landowners. During the short period of Soviet rule the number of White Russian and Ukrainian schools, newspapers, hospitals, crèches, etc., increased rapidly—the whole drive and purpose of the "native" Soviet regime was to raise the standard of living of the peasants and workers instead of, as under the previous dispensation, holding them down to serve the needs of an alien Polish ruling class.

It is only fair to add that in the towns of Vilna and Lvov, as distinguished from the surrounding countryside, there are Polish majorities, and the Polish population includes all classes in the community, that there are Polish universities, and that these towns have played a great part in the culture and traditions of Poland. But some special provision for cultural autonomy would cover this situation.

A LABOUR CANDIDATE

SIR,—About your article "A Case for Plain Speaking." Is Poland entirely to blame for her unreasonableness? Before Germany attacked Russia Britain applauded and encouraged Poland's nationalistic spirit and claims.

It was only when our powerful and valuable ally Russia refused to allow Poland's claims that we saw the expediency of a more reasonable view of things—that small nations must learn to live in amity with their large neighbours.

Why should it be ridiculous of the Poles to imagine that Britain would guarantee their frontiers when that is just what Britain did in the near past?

ISOBEL M. OWEN

MRS. WEBB'S SOCIALISM

SIR,—Kingsley Martin in his article on Beatrice Webb states:

> They combined this uncritical advocacy with withering contempt for the Communist Party in this country. They were describing the Socialist State they had always believed in; they did not like the practice of Communist tactics applied to Britain.

I am familiar with the published writings of the Webbs, but cannot recall matter which bears out the above statement. Can your contributor give the references required to justify his statement?

ROY A. MARSTON

[Mrs. Webb did not, as far as I recollect, publish her views of the British C.P. I referred to her frequently repeated private opinion; Mr. Marston could check this with any of her personal friends. In the passage quoted above I meant to indicate that I thought her attitude not wholly consistent.—ED., *N.S. and N.*]

SIR,—I enclose for your interest a letter from Mrs. Webb dated March 18th, 1943. It is the last I had from her. I suggest that you may care to quote the following passage for the benefit of your readers:

> . . . I think THE NEW STATESMAN is doing splendidly—it is the only paper which seems to take a wise view of what is happening in the world to-day and what ought to happen in the future.
>
> How completely the attitude to the Soviet Union has changed during the last year. I am pestered with requests for articles and interviews explaining why the Soviet Union will succeed in beating back Germany and how it will be able to prevent the two leading results after the war within our own country and the U.S.A., of mass unemployment and under-employment and the decline of the birth-rate.

This seems worth recording as Mrs. Webb's final view of the role of the U.S.S.R. W

GERMAN STUDENTS

SIR,—The news you gave in "A London Diary" of May 15th about the resistance of German students is heartening indeed—although perhaps not so entirely unforeseen as you suggest. The idea of the true university is very much alive in Europe to-day as the organisation of which I am secretary for England and Wales has good reason to know. International Student Service has for many years been helping student Prisoners of War, Refugees and Internees of all nationalities, and through its headquarters a certain amount of information has become available concerning student conditions in Europe.

We know that local committees of I.S.S. continue to function in the university towns of France: we know that the students of Sweden have the cause of their suffering contemporaries very much at heart, we know from the Rector of Athens University himself that help, albeit in pitiably small quantities, is reaching the starving and diseased students of Athens and Salonika. Polish student internees in Switzerland are completing their university studies with the help of I.S.S. and the co-operation of the Swiss university authorities. Similar assistance is being rendered to student victims of the war in North Africa, Spain, Belgium, Finland and, of course, China. Over 10,000 British, French, Belgian, Polish and Serbian student prisoners of war, not to mention Axis student prisoners, are receiving aid in the form of books and writing material through the agency of the I.S.S. in co-operation with the Y.M.C.A. War Prisoners' Aid Department and the Educational Books Section of the British Red Cross.

Now comes this confirmation of hopes we had been nursing that the student youth of Germany would be waking from its long nightmare of academic and human perversion. That fact is full of high promise for the post-war period. For out of the ideological conflict now raging must arise a new student solidarity, based not on any concept of an exclusive student class, but on the far healthier one of a student calling, pledged to the passionate pursuit of truth in the service of mankind.

JAMES L. HENDERSON,
Secretary for England and Wales

WAITING FOR BEVERIDGE

SIR,—Your contributor "Saratar" appears to have sustained terrible shocks when, having contracted industrial dermatitis, he came in contact with our medical and legal system. I will say nothing about the complaints about the medical treatment which he received, although I have heard such complaints for many years. But I am not in the least surprised at his treatment under the Workmen's Compensation Act, nor should he be, if he is in any real sense an "investigator." I gave evidence of all this sort of thing before the Royal Commission three years ago, and it is still going on. Your contributor has been well treated compared with many workmen; I could fill your columns with such cases.

The actual procedure of the certifying surgeon (now, by the way, called the examining surgeon) and medical referee is often shocking. Your contributor probably does not know that if the medical referee had decided against him the decision would have been final and all the dermatologists in the world could not have obtained compensation for him. Neither does he appear to know that the employers' insurance com-

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JONATHAN CAPE

pany could write to the medical referee making all sorts of allegations against him about which he need never be informed.

Your contributor asks what a man does while he is waiting for his compensation. He may get an advance from his approved society or from the P.A.C.—or he may starve. The question your contributor does not ask is what does he do when he *receives* his 35s. per week—the maximum for a man without children under 15.

I have seen thousands of these cases—pathetic, cruel and disgraceful. The weekly compensation, the administration of the whole Workmen's Compensation system, is a disgrace far greater than anything your contributor even dreams of.

A Bill was recently passed by agreement to remedy certain wartime difficulties. It was an insult to injured workmen. An increase in compensation is being pressed for by the miners; we will see what happens. And meantime we must "wait for Beveridge." I wish some of the comfortable people who give this advice could receive some of the treatment which injured and disabled workmen receive and then see how they liked "waiting for Beveridge."

One final point: was "Saratar" a member of a trade union? If so, why did he not get their help? If not, why not?

W. H. THOMPSON

SIR,—Many hospital almoners, in common with other members of the health services, will have welcomed Saratar's article in your last issue which shows clearly the deficiencies in treatment by a hospital which has not met the need it was designed to serve. It must, however, be clear to any careful reader that the fault here lies in personal failure to fulfil their functions on the part of the servants of the system rather than of the system itself. Just as all but one of the medical men in the picture failed to treat the patient adequately so two out of the three almoners who interviewed him failed to give him the necessary assurance that economic or personal factors would not be allowed to prevent the full benefit of medical treatment. Incidentally, the writer does not make clear whether these were qualified almoners or investigating clerks untrained in the functions of an almoner. The almoner is not an assessment officer though some hospitals still insist that this shall be her chief duty. Her true function is to work with the medical staff to enable the patient to carry out treatment and to use on his behalf the resources of the community in so far as he needs them. It is also her duty to help the patient towards his re-establishment after illness in normal life.

Saratar's complaint centres round a story of diagnosis and assessment as an inadequate method of dealing with illness. It would have been interesting if he had been able to pursue the matter further, describing treatment and after-care in a hospital where there is an established department of trained almoners. He would then have discovered the answer to his question, "How does a workman, whose family or friends cannot or will not assist him, cope with such a situation?"

MARGARET J. ROXBURGH,
Secretary

The Institute of Hospital Almoners,
Tavistock Square, W.C.1.

SIR,—May I correct possible false impressions that may result from Hippo's letter?

It is true that I was courteously treated by the examining doctor at St. X's Hospital: my article stated nothing to the contrary. Personal details were given only in reply to direct questions, and occupied perhaps two minutes, or less. Whether my condition was "very mild," and "would almost certainly have cleared up in a fortnight," or not, is a matter of opinion: on the following day the senior dermatologist of another hospital regarded it as requiring lengthy treatment as an in-patient.

If Hippo has had practical experience of the use of tar ointment, he must know of its exceptionally penetrative properties. More than one thickness of shirt material would be required to protect clothing and bed linen; and much would be needed to do this over nearly half one's body surface.

As for the rest, I can only say that the events recorded in my article were truly set down.

"SARATAR"

DID HE CONSENT?

SIR,—In the "Apology" which you published in your last issue, and which referred to my recent election as an A.R.A., you state that I was elected without my consent. May I point out that this was not so. The Secretary of the Royal Academy wrote to me in April, 1940, asking if I wished to be nominated as a candidate, and I replied at that time that I should be pleased to be nominated. On hearing recently of my election I wrote to the Secretary saying that it was three years since the matter had been raised and that in considering it now and in taking into account the fact that I had never been an exhibitor at the R.A., I thought it inappropriate for me to be an A.R.A.

WILLIAM COLDSTREAM

[Mr. Coldstream has let his good nature get the better of his logic. Consent to be a candidate in 1940 does not imply a similar consent in 1943. Since he was elected without his knowledge and, has in fact refused the "honour," his denial of our statement can be attributed only to politeness.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SIR,—I have followed the correspondence entitled "Ethics Without Revelation" with great interest. I feel that many people must find themselves in a similar position to myself. We feel, with the Rector of Dartington, that ethics without religion are not enough, that expediency becomes the ultimate criterion and that man is in dire need of spiritual anchorage—a faith whereby he may test his actions and plan his life. At the same time we are unable to believe in a personal Deity or to accept the theology of the Christian churches. As the Rev. R. A. Edwards says, probably our acceptance of the Sermon on the Mount as a way of life is sufficient for us who have had a religious upbringing, but what of our children? As parents and teachers this constitutes a very real problem. To many people of my generation the New Psychology came as a glorious release. No longer did we have to put a moral value on to anything; children were not good or bad, they were either free or inhibited. All one had to do as an educator was to provide the right environment for growth, allow scope for free expression and the child would grow up a rational, happy being, able to get the best out of life as a balanced individual and to give his best to society as a mature citizen. Many progressive schools are now coming to the standpoint that this simply does not work, that it is a wrong attitude leading to the kind of individualism which is wrecking the world. It seems more and more clear to many of us that children need moral training, and that by having no religious teaching they are missing something that gave us a sense of security and a feeling of social responsibility.

We ourselves may find inspiration in Gerald Heard's philosophy, but this is little help where children are concerned. They need colour, ritual, and above all concreteness in their teaching. When my five-year-old daughter says to me, "Is God Jesus' father?" and I try to explain as simply as I can the nature of God to me, she is profoundly dissatisfied and not a little puzzled. A father is something she can understand, and the idea of an all-powerful, loving Father is a comforting one in a world where one's own father is in the army and the sirens shriek in the night.

Is one to deny one's children this, because one's own intellect will not admit it, or is one to teach orthodox Christianity not believing it fully, in the hope that the child will grow up to challenge what he has been taught; or is there, perhaps, a third course open to us, whereby the coming generation may have a religion embracing the "absolute" without the logical trappings which many of us cannot accept?

MARGARET BARCLAY

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

It is good news that Gide is safe in Tunisia. On the continent he has been one of the greatest living influences on many intellectuals who reached adult life at the end of the last war. But others have been—and still are—terrified of the effect of that influence. Massie wrote: "Le scélérat, la bête puante lâchée sur les jeunes gens, le cynique dévorateur de la famille française." Few writers have been so misjudged, so maligned, and few have had their message so traduced. Much has been written on him during the last quarter of a century but little that is fair and objective. Now there comes from America the first complete work in English dealing with him and as such it is something of a literary event.* Unfortunately it is not a wholly satisfactory book. Its chief value lies in the fact that it sets forth—summarises almost—the progress and development of Gide's thought through his succeeding works and this is certainly useful as a prelude to a deeper study. Its failure is that it tends to be narrative rather than critical, that it does not seek to interpret or assess the different values.

Few writers have written as much about themselves as Gide has; few have analysed themselves more fully. But introspection is not always self-analysis and moreover much escapes even the most sincere of self-analysts. Gide besides is troubled with morbid scruples and anxious lest he may attribute to himself undeserved good motives; this often vitiates his objective judgment. Mr. Klaus Mann has known Gide for more than fifteen years and we should have welcomed some guidance from him. Unfortunately he does not appear to be a very subtle or acute psychologist.

Gide has always been much preoccupied with himself—morbidly obsessed, unkind critics have said—and it is always some aspect of himself that he has pursued in each of his succeeding works. He is thus an author of whom a knowledge is essential for a full understanding of his writings. But, just as his message has been traduced, his personality has been maligned. The portrait which emerges from his *Journal*—his greatest work and the one best suited to his particular talent—is that of a man of rare delicacy, gentleness and sympathy, a man most at home with simple, unpretentious and genuine people. He has written few passages of greater beauty, tenderness and understanding than his description of the death of the writer Charles-Louis Philippe. We feel his compassion for "les déshérités" of life; we see him as the supporter of the outcast, of the oppressed, of those who cannot conform, of vagabonds. He worked for the petty criminals when he sat on a jury at Rouen because he thought that their transgressions needed compassionate understanding rather than punishment. He supported the cause of th edown-trodden negroes in the Congo. He showed rare kindness and sympathy for the dirty unattractive beggar children round his home in Normandy. They considered him their friend and would run towards him when they saw him in the distance, walking with his wide pilgrim's cloak fluttering in the wind. He used to sit amongst them and read to them, though always, when he got home, he had to shake their vermin from his clothes. But he never seems to have felt disgust for them. "Dans les plis de mon manteau, le petit Joseph, comme l'an dernier vient se blottir. Cet enfant est affreux, il ne sait même pas sourire. Sa soeur est là, chétive et pâle; haute comme un épi, pas plus. Le dénuement de ces petits est tel que la pitié ne sait où se prendre; ils sont à souhaiter à neuf tout entiers."

Many are the passages in his *Journal* in which he describes his care towards birds and little wild animals—rabbits and hares and such like—whom he picked up injured or sick in the woods and whom he nursed back to health in his own bedroom, feeding them on drops of warm milk as if they were babies, and tending them through long nights of crisis.

Yet, in spite of all that Gide has written about himself, there is much that still remains mysterious. We shall not even begin to know him until we understand more fully his emotional life, and on this he seems either to be discreetly reticent or else, when he is outspoken, to lead us—perhaps unconsciously—on to false trails. There are passages in *Si le Grain ne Meurt*—very frank passages—that seem to one reader at least to bear interpretations other than the obvious.

We shall not know him fully until we understand something of his relationship with his wife, which he calls in his *Journal* "le drame secret de ma vie." He admits that because of his reticence on this subject his diary is "aveuglé" and he has been able to give only a mutilated image of himself. Yet the *Journal* reflects indirectly the stresses, the complexity and the depth of what was undoubtedly the greatest emotional experience of his life. In 1933 he wrote that he had never really loved anyone but her and after her death he said that he no longer had any interest in life. Unfortunately much of the material for such a knowledge has been destroyed. H- tells us that, at her request, he tore up many pages which he later regretted for he had never written any more vivid. He calls his attachment for her "le secret de toutes mes indecisions."

He is right when he says "Ce sont mes réticences qui sont les plus passionnées" and it must come as a surprise to most readers to learn from Mr. Mann that Gide has a daughter—illegitimate—whom he recognised in 1938 after the death of his wife. He does not mention this daughter in his *Journal* nor his relationship with her mother. Normally such a question would be no concern of the critic but, with a writer who professes and practises in other equally personal and delicate matters outspokenness, with a writer eager that his readers should understand him fully and whose declared aim is "lire en soi et s'exprimer tel que l'on est et tel que l'on se saisit" it is important and significant psychologically.

We would like from the critic help in estimating how far Gide's attitudes are natural to him and how far they are assumed for intellectual speculation. Mr. Mann says that he has the look of a diabolical priest. He seemed to me more like an Oxford or Cambridge don—but with sympathy and courtesy rare in a don—who is used to speculating on every conceivable subject with cool and detached objectivity and tolerance, without approval or disapproval, since these matters remain in the realm of speculation. Nothing is impossible to the don as the basis of argument or conversation. He can adopt any attitude and he does not even need to believe what he is saying—all he needs is to produce cogent arguments to support his standpoint—since he is not personally involved. Each of Gide's novels is an attitude that he adopts for the sake of speculation—he tells us as much in his *Journal*. This makes him less of a novelist than a moralist, less of a novelist than an investigator. He cannot indeed rank amongst the greatest French novelists. He is not concerned with creating complex and complicated human beings giving us the illusion of life. He is an investigator—fortunately he is also a very great artist—less interested in *men* than in *man*, less anxious to make an amalgam of contradictions than to isolate special characteristics. He is like a chemist who isolates a substance in order to obtain its purest essence. Each of his works is a chemical experiment in "purifying" some one quality which he pursues to its logical conclusion.

In his study of *man* Gide is as interested in what is normally called "sin" as was Baudelaire. He wants—as Baudelaire wanted—to make us review our attitude to right and wrong, to break down the hierarchy of accepted moral values and to make us abandon our moral gilt-edged securities. But, whereas Baudelaire distinguished between the essence of "good" and the essence of "evil," Gide thinks that the complete men can only come from a fusion of the two principles, and that more importance should be given to what is called "evil." For him the troubled, evil depths of personality are often the richest soil of humanity. In *Nouveaux Prétextes* he contrasts the opposing theories of Ricardo and Carey to explain his contention. Ricardo's theory was that when a country has been occupied for some time the best soil is cultivated, since the first settlers appropriated the best lands. Soon only the poorest soil is left untilled. Carey's theory, on the contrary, is that the first settlers did not take the richest lands, but only those most easily cultivated, which is the poorest soil and they soon exhausted its possibilities. The fertile soil is that which, in a state of nature, is over-run by rank vegetation and before it can be cultivated it must be cleared.

Gide claims that those who have studied man's nature have studied it only where it is most easily accessible. That explains why he has dealt almost exclusively with what is exceptional in human nature, with the "cas déconcertants." "L'homme normal importe peu," he says "J'aimerais dire qu'il est supprimable car on le retrouve partout." He studies cases of apparent wrong-doing; he ferrets out all the personal habits, the nervous tics, which reveal hidden obsessions, hidden inhibitions, the mannerisms that give away the subconscious personality. He studies all this as evidence—criminal evidence—just as a detective looks for finger-prints, or analyses grains of dust, small tufts of hair, in order to build up his case against the accused. By doing so he has widened the field of our psychological investigation.

Mr. Mann calls his book *André Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought*. This title promises much but the book does not fulfil the promise. The value that Gide himself attributes to his works is in the questions they ask, or rather in the questions they force us to ask ourselves. His novels are intended to make us think out our own problems.

The main problem which Gide tries to solve—the crisis of our time—is the reconciliation of the inalienable rights of the individual to personal development and the necessity for the diminution of the misery of the masses. In these days of collectivity, of mass production and mass thinking, when the laudable ideal of universal security from the womb to the tomb is our goal, there is a danger that the individual may be strangled in the ever-increasing coils of bureaucratic red tape. For Gide there is no contradiction between belief in the individual and belief in the communité. In a letter written to Ivanov in 1933 he expressed the conviction that communism could prevail only when account was taken of the particularities of each individual. It is only by being most clearly oneself, he maintains, that one can be of service to others. "L'individualisme bien compris doit servir la communauté." He has a horror of the slow ruminating of the herd—pedigree or otherwise—chewing over and over again the cud of old ideas. "La morale individuelle exige une lutte de l'homme contre son milieu, un effort pour se dépouiller de tout ce qui est étranger à lui-même. C'est une aventure où l'individu doit etre pret à tous les risques." He prefers to wander and be lost rather than to follow others along the well-mapped-out paths. He has the pride of the one lost sheep safe in the knowledge that the eternal shepherd will scour the hill-sides to look for him, and that there will be more rejoicing in Heaven at his being found and brought safely to the fold, than at the safety of the ninety-nine sheep that never strayed.

A French critic once said that when the future has been able to decant the wine of Gide's wisdom and when the dregs of prejudice have had time to settle, then we shall be able to savour the full fragrance of his *bouquet* and we shall come to the conclusion that here is one of the finest literary vintages of the twentieth century.

ENID STARKIE

**André Gide and the Crisis of Modern Thought.* By Klaus Mann. *Creative Age Press.*

HAMILTON ROWAN

The Desire to Please. A Story of Hamilton Rowan and the United Irishmen. By HAROLD NICOLSON. *Constable.* 15s.

At the end of July, 1806, Hamilton Rowan came home in style. Killyleagh was *en fête*. "The bells of the church," says his agent, Archibald Hamilton, "which had lately tolled his father's funeral, now rang for joy at the son's arrival." Spectators, waiting for miles along the road, were gratified by the length of the cavalcade. The four elegant bays were removed from the shafts of the carriage, and townspeople competed to take their place, so that "the carriage and all the family were drawn triumphantly into the town—except Mrs. Hamilton Rowan, who very sensibly observed that she would not be drawn by human creatures who could debase themselves to the rank of beasts." There were, in fact, demonstrations of just that kind against which Mr. Hamilton Rowan had been advised by his cousin and neighbour, Lord Dufferin. Himself, he was out to discourage nothing: all this was exactly after his own heart. He became, upon approaching the Castle, "very much affected indeed. The scene was impressive to an extreme. After so long an absence—an absence which but a short time ago he thought was to be for ever—after so many years of exile and misfortune—once more to enter the seat of his ancestors and to enter it as its proprietor and lord-absolved-restored-renewed-triumphant—'twas not easily to be borne. He melted into tears."

The end of the exile—which had been, from the start, one long slow graduation in disenchantment—marked the official end of Hamilton Rowan as rebel, hero and patriot. It was the inconvenience of a long-standing death sentence—this only remitted in Dublin the other day—that had kept the master of Killyleagh from home. As for the "misfortune"—you could trace the use of that word to the agent's typical tactful Irish obliqueness, but actually it goes pretty near the mark. There *had* been one consistent misfortune: temperament. From this had sprung (as the world saw it) aberrations of every possible size. Hamilton Rowan, whose mother had made a special journey to London that her child should not see the light on Irish soil, had been born, in 1751, to an age and into a society in which the moon was the enthusiast's only proper friend. His parents' marriage had been of the kind that is unpropitious most of all for the children: the English Rowans deplored the Ulster Hamiltons; in Rathbone Place the boy was reared with a bullying sternness intended to weed out every Hamilton trait. Could Ireland fail to become the magnetic alternative to the detestable, daily English regime? Could nobility fail to be queered into silliness, daydreams into obsessions, courage into bravado, in a youth made heir to his English grandfather's fortune on condition he change his father's name for his mother's and not visit Ireland at younger than twenty-five? Apparently, he both had his cake and ate it: while drawing, to meet his Cambridge and other debts, on his expectations under the Rowan will, he paid secret flying visits to his father and Killyleagh. But if this duplicity kept both parties quiet it aggravated the conflict inside the man.

Hamilton Rowan (whose surname at birth was Hamilton, and whose children reverted to that name) was Mr. Harold Nicolson's great-great-grandfather; *The Desire to Please* is Hamilton Rowan's story. The book has a sort of double structure: there is direct biography and there is speculation. The biography covers the years and scenes — Ireland, London, Ireland, France, America, Ireland again—at an even pace; the speculation is static and works down, like a drill. The action is very clear, being part of history, but the actor is, at times, a blurred, looming close-up, made more rather than less mysterious by being almost too near the eye. This placing of Hamilton Rowan just out of focus I take to be not a failure but a deliberate intention of Mr. Nicolson's art. The underlying subject of *The Desire to Please* is the feeling of a descendant towards an ancestor. The suspicion of being implicated, the over-susceptibility to certain traits, the sense of guilt, the touches of harshness (such as one might feel towards oneself), the wary search for the ulterior motive—all are there. That this analysis of the sense of being descended is fascinating, I need not say. It might, however, seem to the outside person that Mr. Nicolson has overshot the strong latent naivety in Hamilton Rowan, and that he has either ignored, or abandoned as too simple, explanations of his character and his conduct that might be clear to another eye.

The story of Hamilton Rowan, as told in *The Desire to Please*, begins, not with his birth in Rathbone Place in 1751, but with his emergence—out of the family past, out of a disregarding silence and awkwardness—into his great-great-grandson's youthful consciousness. Mr. Nicolson, as a boy on visits to relations in Ireland, became aware of an ancestor who for some reason had not been quite the thing. This was the man whose face came to be printed, together with faces of other patriots, on handkerchiefs into which the Dublin crowd wept, outside a prison, during a 1920 political execution. How was he to be reconciled with the great houses? The child's first wish to drag anything awkward up gave place to intellectual curiosity, to the will to assimilate Hamilton Rowan, even though this might mean having to know the worst.

The worst does not seem so very bad. Hamilton Rowan's behaviour was impolitic. The failure of the projects that he espoused made him appear mistaken. He threw his personal weight—and through everything he remains an impressive man—behind causes without enough calculation. The American Revolution and the French Revolution were two dawns that, for him, lost their colour late. He identified England with oppression, as he had had reason to do in youth. The sobriety and the vehemence of the Ulster Whigs, of the United Irishmen, rallied in him all those faculties that he had always, really, hated to dissipate. Acting with the United Irishmen, he conspired with France against England, in Ireland's interest. His adventures were, on the whole, ignominious; his troubled life held not one explicit heroic moment. His tastes were simple: he loved dogs and boating and his on the whole rather bleak wife. *Did* anything so consistent, so calculating, so fundamentally cold as "the desire to please" really dominate him and determine the course he took? I see in him rather the desire to *be* pleased, to believe in masters, to release the waiting floods of his admiration. The ideas to which he had sacrificed, from which he recanted in order to return as master to Killyleagh, no longer drew any force from his nature: it was his tragedy that they had died in him. He was the principal sufferer from his own guilelessness. ELIZABETH BOWEN

NEW NOVELS

Frossia. By E. M. ALMEDINGEN. *The Bodley Head.* 9s. 6d.

The Conspirators. By FREDRIC PROKOSCH. *Chatto and Windus.* 8s.

Horns of a Goat. By HAMILTON BASSO. *Constable.* 8s. 6d.

The Faithful River. By STEFAN ZEROMSKI. *Minerva.* 7s. 6d.

In the past novelists have provided fairly reliable signposts to the moral, spiritual or intellectual problems which confronted their contemporaries. Detachment has usually meant a refusal to take sides, not a refusal to be interested; and the rare cases of true isolation—Alain-Fournier and Firbank come to mind—were very consciously esoteric. The didactic Marxist makes the mistake of *demanding* a literature which is in contact with life, and condemning detachment as a betrayal. The truth is not that one is better than the other, but simply that detachment is far rarer. Most novelists have been unable to avoid their own zeitgeist, even when they have been in bitter opposition to it.

And yet there have been periods of greater and less compulsion. The English literary renaissance of the Twenties was a brief holiday of "dandyism" (to use Mr. Connolly's phrase) in which writers achieved a happy and profitable irresponsibility. The gloomy Thirties made this kind of writing not wrong, but virtually impossible. The hideous Manichæism of Fascism and Democracy, brutality and humanity, tyranny and freedom could not be disregarded, and it was inevitable that the writers' response should be somewhat harsh, clumsy and self-conscious. For most modern writers the issue is unmanageable. It is as if a soprano were suddenly compelled to become a town-crier, to scream against tyranny, to bellow for justice, liberty and truth. In fact, the wilderness of modern English literature is due to this, that the inescapable human issues are too monstrous for expression. We are living in a period of violent literary nostalgia, contemplating Henry James rather than George Eliot, Virginia Woolf rather than D. H. Lawrence. To-day it is almost impossible to explore life's subtle attacks on an artist's integrity, or the effects of just this precise meeting on the hero's sensibility. And yet such questions should be true preoccupations for a novelist. The brutal laws of political development have proved wholly hostile to literature.

The four novels under review make an interesting cross-section of wartime writing. Only one of them could conceivably have been written ten years ago. All these books are the good, competent work of writers in the second class—the soil from which a greater writer should arise. Only one of them is in the direct sense a war novel, but all are concerned with the elementary moral problems of our age. Miss Almedingen is the most ambitious, though not, I think, the most successful of these novelists. Frossia is a girl of wealthy Russian parents, confronted with the Bolshevik revolution and the four or five years which followed it. Her proud, impossible relations have committed a holocaust of suicide in which Frossia has refused to participate. Her decision is an affirmation of life against death in more than the obvious sense, and it is this affirmation, reiterated throughout the appalling years of famine, disease and butchery which is the theme and the great strength of the book. Though she is not a Communist and consistently refuses even to contemplate the political dogmas around her, Frossia is ready to work and to suffer in a Petrograd where hard work and suffering are universal. The moral of the book is admirable, and profound, for the great social issues of revolution and reaction can best be understood as part of an eternal war between life and death. The "angry wish to die" was only a little less apparent in Tsarist Russia than in Nazi Germany, and the revolution, with all its brutalities and terrors, was probably the greatest affirmation of life against death which this century has known.

The weaknesses of *Frossia* as a novel are largely technical, the writing is flat and undistinguished, the situations are too repetitive and many of the minor characters are too slickly and superficially presented. The book is too long, and induces a certain weariness, an irritable "Yes, yes," as the message is rammed yet again triumphantly home. But this is a book of distinguished thought and a variety of true feeling which no technical errors can disguise.

Mr. Prokosch has chosen Lisbon for the setting of a novel about spies, counter-spies, lovely women, terror, murder and escape. I could not avoid the thought: "If only this were Simenon!" It is a theme which he would have executed with a perfection of excitement, atmosphere and lucid intelligence. In comparison, Mr. Prokosch exhibits a fault which he has already illustrated in other works, consistent over-writing. The theme—a simple story of pursuit and assassination—is adequate and the background is well-chosen. There are many moments of vivid excitement,

many more of poetic and highly successful description.

But the pitch is too high, or alternatively the prose is far too rich and luxuriant. Often one becomes uneasily aware of a hollowness in the writing, a lack of any true content in the cascade of words:

"The sound of the bell, too, seemed to darken; to grow deflected and atomised, to scatter through the spaces of the night like a spray from a fountain. It travelled from cliff to cliff, from ocean to ocean and age to age. Hugo stood frozen, caught in its unexpected magic. Time and space spread in waves from an invisible core, the tinkling of the little bronze bell."

And this is true not only of the prose but also of the ideas. There is a certain amount of rather banal reflection on the theme of killing or not killing—for the rest, whatever the ideas may be they are clouded by a sort of trick obscurity, like the suspect gestures of a conjurer.

The final impression is that Mr. Prokosch should never have attempted such a theme, and that he wouldn't have attempted it had he lived at a more fortunate time.

Horns of a Goat is the most successful of the novels under review, if only because it is the least ambitious. Mr. Basso has not attempted a revolution, nor even a wartime European capital. His short book is a study of Huey Long's dictatorship in Louisiana, skilfully described by a rather unsubstantial hero who becomes a victim of that loathsome outburst of mass hysteria. This is a most convincing picture of a local fascist movement, not generalised into allegory but described with clinical understanding. This is fascism of a type even vulgarer than its European originals—corrupt, falsely jovial and hideously sentimental. It is the fascism of the Christian name, prevalent with all the most unpleasant features of Buchmanism. This is a good combative book, written with very considerable skill and real perspicacity.

In *The Faithful River* the background of brutality and barbarism is provided by the Russian army of suppression in the Polish revolt of 1863. Though this is an historical novel the issue is as contemporary as Mr. Basso's. A fugitive rebel is given refuge by a Polish family and guarded, at the risk of their lives, from the Muscovite soldiery. This is a dignified if rather unoriginal restatement of civilisation's heroism in the battle against its eternal enemies. A love story twines conventionally and rather unhappily through all the blood and suffering.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

ENGLISH HOUR

The Reader Over Your Shoulder. A Handbook for Writers of English Prose. By ROBERT GRAVES and ALAN HODGE. *Cape.* 18s.

One's first impression of this book——

No, that won't do. Mr. Graves and Mr. Hodge, reading over my shoulder, will exclaim: "*One's!* Now what does that mean, yours, or someone else's, or yours and someone else's? Say which you mean! And *first impression.* The first impression of a book indicates the first printing, and the reader will assume that you are referring to that. You see, he has been sidetracked already. This is disgusting, Stonier. Go down three places."

More than half of *The Reader Over Your Shoulder* consists of "examinations and fair copies" of contemporary prose, made with meticulous zeal. The object is to correct bad prose, but the authors, who have drawn up the rules and obviously enjoy the game, carry their fault-finding to wild lengths. They pick up, for example, a newspaper report which begins:

> Arsenal may have lost the League Cup replay by the odd goal of three . . .

and look at another and ask in shocked tones, "Is this a Final or a Semi-Final match? We aren't told"; one of their tests being, apparently, that everything in print should explain itself for the benefit of an imaginary outside reader. Mr. Clive Bell is censured on another page for mentioning Lucretius without saying that he was a Roman. But why should every sports report be written *sub specie aeternitatis* and why should Mr. Clive Bell, in a book on *Civilisation*, stoop to the most ignorant of his readers? Such "corrections" would remove the flavour from any writing, and I have no doubt that Mr. Graves and Mr. Hodge could produce "fair copies" of Proust, Henry James and D. H. Lawrence which would be flawlessly academic, with Proust's sentences chopped to reasonable lengths, and Lawrence and Henry James using the same interchangeable style. Mr. Graves, in fact, has tried his hand at re-writing Dickens, with disastrous results. (*The Real David Copperfield*, 1933.)

The mania for correction takes various forms. Terms—even the commonest terms—must be rigidly defined:

> I. A. Richards: "Without the existence of the arts we could compare . . ."
>
> Graves and Hodge: "Who is 'we'? . . . 'The arts?' Which are these?"

Metaphors must always be fully "pictured":

> J. M. Keynes: "It is a case of pull devil, pull baker—with the devil so far on top . . ."
>
> Graves and Hodge: "Since, as subsequently appears, the devil and the baker are tugging for the possession of a cake, neither will be pictured by the reader as on top of the other. Are they perhaps scrambling for the cake, as in the Westminster School scramble? If so, does 'on top' mean 'on top of the cake' or 'on top of the baker who is clutching it'?"

Even the most venerable of usages are condemned:

> T. S. Eliot: "English criticism is inclined to argue . . ."
>
> Graves and Hodge: "No: it is the critics who argue."

Hold out your hand, Gibbon. And, MacCarthy, you can't have been attending when we learnt about being *accurate:*

> Desmond MacCarthy in *Sunday Times*: "I have written often enough on this page."
>
> Graves and Hodge: "He does not write *on* this page, but *for* it."

(Yet these sticklers for accuracy can misspell Mr. MacCarthy's name seven times in two pages.) Is there any limit to the Graves and Hodge flair for misunderstanding? Almost none, so far as I can see; they discover more ambiguity in everyday English than Mr. Empson ever dreamed of, but unlike Mr. Empson they hate what they find. They can't bear the taste of "ginger i' th' mouth." Every nuance, every ripple or crease of individuality must be smoothed out of a passage before it meets with their approval. The "fair copies" are as a rule impeccable in their way; if, that is, one wants to read a report of a football match that might be a *Times* leader, or a criticism by Eliot or MacCarthy that would go easily into Latin. After each "fair copy" there is a comment that puts the offending author in his place: Shaw and Wells, Viscount Halifax, Hemingway, Bertrand Russell, Dr. Hugh Dalton, the Bishop of Chichester, Ian Hay and Sir Arthur Eddington, and some fifty other writers, all receive lessons in logic and deportment. Sometimes the lesson is deserved; and it seems to me a pity that a book, whose general aims are admirable, should be spoilt so often by its pedantry. The case for plain English and against slipshod eccentricity is a strong one. It would be even stronger if Mr. Graves and Mr. Hodge did not depress one with their own English, in which every allusion is explained, every metaphor checked and labelled. Better Hemingway's rabbit talk, Baldwin's speech-day eloquence, Castlerosse's tattle, than the Graves and Hodge brand of monotone.

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HARRAP

The preference for plain English leads to some shortsighted judgments in the first half of the book, a general discourse on English prose. De Quincey is dismissed with a remark about his "affected quaintness"; Sir Thomas Browne, too, though he comes in for a little praise, is "quaint"; and *Tristram Shandy* was written "to amuse people who were easily bored with the relentless orderly progress of narrative or argument." The authors of *The Reader Over Your Shoulder* prefer Defoe, Samuel Butler and Cobbett. No reason why they shouldn't; but the preference is raised into a system, we are led to believe that the genius of the language is favourable to plain prose, and that allusive and imaginative writing is somehow against nature. To ram home the argument Mr. Graves and Mr. Hodge, I notice, quote only good examples from the authors they like and bad examples from those they deplore. This may be due to a genuine critical blindness, but the passage from George Moore, for example, labelled "painfully sensitive," suggests careful selection. When it comes to the living and recently dead a curious caution can be read between the lines. Lawrence, Forster, Norman Douglas, Virginia Woolf are not even mentioned. The first, I suppose, by Graves and Hodge standards, would be beneath criticism. Virginia Woolf's punctuation, though, doesn't seem to conform to either of the systems given on page 162.

G. W. STONIER

SOUND AND FURY

Creative Demobilisation. Vol. I.—PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL PLANNING. By E. A. GUTKIND. Vol. II.—COST STUDIES IN NATIONAL PLANNING. Edited by E. A. GUTKIND. *Kegan, Paul.* 42*s.*

Social Reconstruction. By M. ALDERTON PINK. *Nelson.* 3*s.*

The words "reconstruction" and "planning" have already established something like a fraternal relationship with the blessed word "Mesopotamia." In the first two of these three books Mr. Gutkind has given us a supreme example of the ardour and energy which speculate in a vacuum so vague that one almost sighs for the fine simplicity of Adam Smith's "simple system of natural liberty." It is a great pity, for he has many virtues. He has read widely; he is obviously enthusiastic; and it is clear that he is a man of high purposes and great energy. But the first of these books has little or no relation to reality. It is essentially a conspectus of general principles which rarely seeks to come down to earth. It draws maps, it offers plans, it uses immense categorical imperatives. Its vital weakness is a steadfast refusal to relate the world that is to the world that might be. With a vast and solemn apparatus, Dr. Gutkind informs us that, with the end of *laissez-faire*, we must plan so that people live in spacious dwellings in spacious towns, that there must be a proper balance between agriculture and industry, that we must make rural life attractive, that we must use the full resources of science and technology in the planned society, that we must never forget the human factor. He is full of enthusiasm for ideas like decentralisation, and functional relationships, and the "culture economy of regionalism." But it is very difficult to read his volume and gain any clear notion of either what he wants or how he proposes to get it. The only things about which one emerges with certainty is a realisation of Dr. Gutkind's ardour and his conviction that we can build a better world. One feels that he is bursting with an important message which he is somehow unable to deliver.

The second volume, which Dr. Gutkind has edited, is a mixture of concrete proposals, like that of Mr. Page for a national coastal park in North Cornwall, or the really interesting paper on railway electrification by Mr. K. H. Johnson, with jejune observations on what is wrong at present and what would put it right, which assume that the creator (or the planner) is starting from scratch, and is given unchallenged authority to build a cosmos from a chaos. Vast questions are raised, immense terms are used, but it is very difficult to extract from the book any other conclusions than that ill-balanced communities do harm, and well-balanced communities good, and that, if we have the will to do so, we can plan a well-balanced community which enjoys open spaces, healthy dwellings, clean air and a good job. I am not convinced that it ought to take two rather large volumes to arrive at these results.

Mr. Pink's book is a short summary of that progressive creed which, broadly speaking, asserts that a better world is available if we would use our reason to secure that world. He writes well, and he makes his points concisely; the difficulty about his view is that he makes it all seem so simple that it is not easy to understand why reason has been unable to prevail. I suspect that Mr. Pink has never really asked himself what the relations are between reason and interest. If he did, I doubt whether he would manage to maintain the cheery optimism which distinguishes his pages. I venture to recommend to him a course in the classic political biographies, say, of the last fifty years. He would then understand why T. H. Huxley thought that truth, every so often, needed a hard push from behind.

HAROLD J. LASKI

NEARLY ALL AMERICANS

They Were Great Americans. With an Introduction by VISCOUNT HALIFAX. *Allen and Unwin.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The idea of this volume is rather good. Since, as Mr. Morgenthau remarks in his preface, "the foundation of courage to-day is our beliefs," it was not unfitting that his department, the U.S. Treasury, should initiate a set of brief personal sketches designed to reinforce the basic American principles. The title is not quite accurate. The grant of perpetual citizenship to the Lafayette family did not make the marquis an American, and Thomas Paine, even if the young Republic had not repudiated him, could not be anything but an Englishman.

The list numbers twenty-eight and the selection is, inevitably, controversial. It includes seven Presidents and three or four other men of affairs; eight soldiers and sailors; one Senator only (Daniel Webster), one Judge (not John Marshall, Holmes or Brandeis), one woman (not Jane Addams but the author of the Battle-hymn), one negro (not Booker Washington). If we put Benjamin Franklin aside as far more than a writer, the only authors admitted are Whitman and Thoreau. Any group of representative Americans from which Emerson is excluded must be a curiosity. American genius has been abundantly displayed in discovery, exploration, and invention, but from these rich fields not one name has been drawn. And none of the founding fathers from Massachusetts is here.

The note of the sketches is unqualified eulogy, sometimes becoming mere rhapsody, as in Fannie Hurst's tribute to Justice Cardozo (misleadingly called Chief Justice), where a concrete exposition would have been worth while. Professor Nevins, as the biographer of Grover Cleveland, ably summarises his value. The first President falls to Rupert Hughes, whose work on George Washington has been candid and serviceable. The two Van Dorens could hardly be better on Franklin and Whitman. Dr. H. S. Canby is on his special ground with Thoreau.

The chapter on Frederick Douglass, the famous liberated slave, makes no mention of his remarkable eloquence. As to W. J. Bryan it is, of course

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true that many of his causes were carried to success, but a touch of criticism from Professor Commager would not have damaged his estimate. Carl Schurz, the leading German refugee of 1848, was a more interesting man than Mr. Willkie's hasty portrait implies. There is a good short study of Woodrow Wilson, whose stock is rising in America. The peroration of his war-declaration speech, April, 1917, is seldom quoted accurately, and Mr. F. L. Allen slips once more. A second series, with a competent introductory essay, would be welcome. S. K. RATCLIFFE

Horizon. *May.* 1s. 6d.

M. Pierre Maillaud in a most penetrating essay considers the relationship in this war between nationalism and ideology, and shows the importance of forming a Western European *bloc*. Mr. Raymond Mortimer celebrates the centenary of Henry James with an article on the three final novels, with which he finds some fault, only to end in what may seem extravagant praise. We can recommend an elegantly feline story by Mr. Pearsall Smith, a madhouse tale by Anna Kavan, two engagingly fresh poems by Miss Diana Witherby, and an all too short comment by the Editor.

Week-end Competitions

No. 694

Set by V. S. Pritchett

At the end of *Joseph Andrews* Fielding introduces Richardson's beloved Pamela into his novel in order to guy her. The normal prizes are offered for a similar malignant grafting from one novel to another, in not more than 200 words.

Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, May 31st.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 691

Set by E. K.

The views of writers about one another are always interesting, though often foolish. Competitors are invited to invent extracts of not more than 200 words from the critical opinions of Gibbon on Carlyle, Carlyle on Wilde, Wilde on Bernard Shaw, or Bernard Shaw on Jane Austen.

Report by E. K.

The vast majority of competitors chose to imitate Wilde or Mr. Shaw, though Gibbon and Carlyle are far easier. None of the Wildes struck me as neat enough, and Mr. Shaw is difficult because his mannerisms are much less pronounced than his opinions. I recommend that prizes of a guinea and a half each go to Leslie Johnson and Yorick. Half a guinea each to L. E. J. and H. T. S.

GIBBON ON CARLYLE—AN EXTRACT.

A liberal mind will delight to honour a brother of the pen, but a cool and candid examination of Carlyle's merits as a writer cannot discover more than a certain gross relish for words, which he indulges at the expense of the more engaging qualities of harmony and elegance. Where others wield the rapier, he plies the bludgeon; he prefers the plangent reboation to the insinuating aside: while forty prolix volumes standing to his credit attest the sincerity of his pleas for the virtues of silence. Nor can a sober judgment assign him a high place among our historians. It behoves the devotee of Clio to assume at least the appearance of detachment, but this egregious Scot is at no pains to dissemble his sense of co-identity with outraged and avenging divinity. The scholar who has imbibed his own doctrine at a purer fount may reflect with amused surprise upon his ready absorption of the crude Teutonic dogma on which he founded his cult of hero worship; and though his exuberant garrulity may dominate the vulgar, the percipient will not fail to discern, beneath the prophetical robes of the sage of Cheyne Row, the rude peasant of Ecclefechan. (LESLIE JOHNSON)

Extract from a Latter Day Pamphlet by
CARLYLE ON OSCAR WILDE.

". . . Sincerity is all; but there is no Sincerity in thee nor any soundness but only a drum—*sounding* as from an asses skin stretched over Emptiness.

Alas, poor Emptiness!—look in thy mirror, and what seest thou there? A Man?—nay, but a Simulacrum, a husk of man, an ape-man or, rather, a man-ape in velvet coat and cravat, posturing and mouthing and gesturing.

What shall become of thee, with thy Lady Windermere's fans, thy laboured witticisms, thy studied paradoxes, thy flippancies and all thy Wardour-street Upholstery of universal varnish and frippery of a world and society now verging towards dissolution? What knowest thou of Reality? Hadst thou truly understood the importance of being earnest *there* might have been some Grace to save thee from the Abyss. But there is in thee no Earnestness but only Charlatanry—Quackery and Cloth-worship and Valethood—and when thy little urchin's barrow, with its Guy Fawkes Mask and Effigies and its twopenny-worth of pretty fireworks have gone into the night, what will be left of thee—nay, what *shall* be left of thee—but an empty rocket-case and a taint of brimstone in the air? O poor trifler! Life is not . . ." (YORICK)

BERNARD SHAW ON JANE AUSTEN.

"As for Miss Austen's novels, if the Government had the good sense to make me Cultural Dictator, I would unhesitatingly ban the lot as being immoral, subversive, and vulgar; immoral because they acquiesce joyously in the existence of idlers, Baronets, curates, Misses, and the whole tribe of unproductive parasites; subversive, because they tend to perpetuate the mischievous illusion, which I have decisively exploded in my Plays and Prefaces, that the initiative in sex transactions remains with Man (and this although Miss Austen knew better and lets us know that she knew better); and vulgar, because Miss Austen is an Englishwoman. For there are two kinds of vulgarity, into one or other of which all English people fall: that of being no lady (or gentleman) and that of being ladylike (or gentlemanly). But I am a person of taste as well as a moralist, and since I am personally immune to these pernicious tendencies, being too intelligent to be demoralised, too well-instructed to be subverted, and, as an Irishman, congenitally incapable of vulgarity, I shall continue to solace my own leisure with the delectable Elizabeth Bennett while the public, under my Dictator's lash, are resentfully misunderstanding "Back to Methuselah."

(L. E. J.)

Extract from the Opinion of
BERNARD SHAW ON JANE AUSTEN.

Fashions in literary reputations are notoriously as fickle and hard to account for as fashions in clothes, but with the best will in the world it is difficult to follow the reasoning of those literary fanciers who seek to elevate Miss Austen into a goddess only a little lower than their tribal deity Shakespear. Apparently the argument is that although Miss Austen's outlook on life was that of a rather spiteful country-house governess, the quality of her work, within its very narrow limits, entitles her to rank with Fielding and Dickens.

I cannot accept this curious view. Jane Austen may have been a rather better writer than Miss Ethel M. Dell, but from any standpoint other than that of purely literary technique there is little to choose between them. Their novels reveal them as women who had only one interest in life—the matrimonial market. Now the persons whose interest in the snobbish kind of matrimonial market described in the Austen novels is anything more than academic are a minute section of society, and the novels are inadmissible as great literature for precisely the same reasons that debar a stamp dealer's catalogue from being included in the Hundred Best Books. (H. T. S.)

AULT AND WIBORG

RECORD PROFIT

THE ninth ordinary general meeting of Ault and Wiborg, Limited, was held on May 18th in London.

Mr. Gerald Wellesley (the chairman) said that the profit for the year was the highest yet earned in the company's history and amounted to £80,068. The directors recommended a dividend of 6¼ per cent., less tax, and a further dividend of 3¼ per cent., less tax, on the Ordinary shares, and were carrying forward £21,951 against £17,239 a year ago.

The figures were particularly satisfactory in view of the fact that the country's consumption of ink and rollers, which in normal times provided almost the whole of their output, had continued to decline. Despite that, their own production of those goods for the general printing trade, and for the newspapers and periodicals which were so essential to the community in these times, had been well maintained. A very considerable increase had also taken place in their turnover of paints, varnishes and metal decorating products.

During the year under review their efforts to broaden the basis of their business had borne increasing fruit. Production in lines directly applicable to the war effort had expanded steadily and continued to do so. Whilst the attention of the board and staff was largely concentrated on making the best use of the company's plant and equipment, having regard to the present circumstances, right had not been lost of the substantial developments which had taken place in their primary industries. The Inter Chemical Corporation in the United States had conducted much research work, the results of which would be of considerable importance in the post-war period. All their factories and also those of their subsidiaries were actively employed. The report was adopted.

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